

THOMAS AQUINAS COLLEGE NEWSLETTER

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“The Work to Which We Have Been Called”

College Gratefully Resumes In-Person Classes on Both Coasts

Just months after being sent home early last spring, after weeks of lockdown and countless hours on Zoom, the students of Thomas Aquinas College returned to their campuses for in-person instruction in August — with a palpable sense of relief, gratitude, and joy.

“The start of a new academic year always brings much excitement, but not like this,” observes Dr. John J. Goyette, dean of the California campus. “After being away for so long, and seeing their friends at other schools unable to return to *their* campuses, our students know just how blessed they are to be doing the hard but important work of Catholic liberal education. And they are more than willing to bear whatever burdens are necessary to make that happen.”

Those burdens have been many: Before coming to campus, all students had to test negative for the COVID-19 virus. For their first week, they wore masks and kept six feet apart from one another. They could only intermingle freely and unmasked after clearing a second round of testing, after which they could leave campus only for the most important of reasons.

“The restrictions that our students have had to endure have been onerous but worth the cost,” says President Michael F. McLean. “Protecting their safety — as well as that of our faculty and staff, their families, and our neighbors — is of paramount concern. We have also had to be vigilant in upholding all applicable safety regulations in California and Massachusetts, so as to ensure the requisite government approvals to reopen both campuses.”



Dr. Katherine Gardner leads a class in one of many makeshift outdoor classrooms on the California campus this fall.

In Massachusetts, where infection rates have generally been lower, and faculty and their families live on campus, fewer precautions have been necessary. “Given our small size, and by barring off-campus visitors, we have been able to effectively function as a single household,” explains Dr. Thomas J. Kaiser, dean of Thomas Aquinas College, New England. “So we have been able to worship, dine, and conduct classes pretty much the same as we always do, which is a great blessing.”

In California, more restrictive local ordinances have required more extensive modifications to the College’s routines. “For most of the semester, we were required to

hold our classes, Masses, and lectures outside,” says Dr. Goyette. “And once we were able to move classes inside again, our tutors wore masks and sat several feet back from the discussion tables. We’ve even had to serve faculty and staff meals in a location separate from the students, which is not our custom, but if the alternative is going back to the online learning of last spring, we’ll take it!”

The successful resumption of in-person classes is a testament to months of hard work on the part of the College’s administrators and Medical Advisory Board. “The reopening plan we used for the start of the academic year is modeled after the one we adopted for the High School Summer Program,” says Dean Goyette. “More than 100 teenagers from across the country came to both campuses for two weeks and — working under these protocols — we did not have a single infection. That was a very encouraging sign to us that we could safely re-open in the fall.”

So far, the strategy has worked once again.

“By God’s grace, we have yet to experience any infections, let alone outbreaks, and for that we are deeply thankful,” says Dr. McLean. “The College owes a tremendous debt of gratitude to our Medical Advisory Board, to the parents who have entrusted their children to our care, to the benefactors who have enabled us to shoulder the additional costs, and to our students and tutors, who have persevered under trying circumstances. Thanks to the dedication of many, we have been able to resume the work to which we have been called.”

“Come, Follow Me, and Do Not be Afraid”

College Opens Year with Small but Joyful Convocations on Both Coasts

Launching its 49th year amidst a pandemic, Thomas Aquinas College observed Convocation 2020 in ways both subdued and exuberant: The ceremonies were less grand than in years past, with neither friends nor parents in attendance. Yet the quieter events did little to dampen the spirits of 138 freshmen, who — despite the requisite masking and social distancing — were delighted not only to come together for in-person instruction, but to commence their four-year experience of Catholic liberal education.

“These things are obviously important and will be well attended to,” said President Michael F. McLean of the health and safety precautions that students on both coasts would be undertaking. “But they are for the sake of the real work of Thomas Aquinas College — the formation of your minds, hearts, and souls in imitation of Christ and in accordance with the teaching authority of the Catholic Church.”

In New England, the College welcomed 36 members of the Class of 2024, hailing from 19 states and 3 countries, on a balmy August 22. The day began with Mass in Our Mother of Perpetual Help Chapel, with the Most Rev. Robert Joseph McManus, S.T.D., Bishop of the neighboring diocese of Worcester, serving as the principal celebrant and homilist.

“Today you begin a new academic year



full of various adventures and opportunities; so be joyful, be at peace, above all else be thankful,” His Excellency told freshmen at the subsequent Matriculation Ceremony held in the Moody Auditorium. “As students of Thomas Aquinas College, you have no reason to walk into the future confused and unsettled, because you have been prepared well to respond to Jesus’ invitation of ‘Come, follow me’ and ‘Do not be afraid.’”

As Director of Admissions Jon Daly called them by name, the freshmen came forward, one at a time, to sign the campus registry, thus beginning their tenure as students at Thomas Aquinas College, New England. The College also welcomed a new member of the East Coast teaching faculty, Dr. John McCarthy (’11). With

Chaplain Rev. Greg Markey leading him, the new tutor and alumnus made the Profession of Faith and Oath of Fidelity, promising obedience to the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Just two days later and 3,000 miles to the west, the College held its California Convocation on August 24. Some 102 freshmen, drawn from 24 states and 5 countries, signed their names to the campus registry at an outdoor Matriculation ceremony held on the academic quadrangle. Joining the new students were two new tutors, Dr. Joshua Lim and Dr. Scott Strader (’97), whom Head Chaplain Rev. Paul Raftery, O.P., led in the Profession of Faith and Oath of Fidelity.

Presiding over the day’s events was an old friend of the College, Rev. Sebastian

Walshe, O.Praem. (’94), a professor of philosophy at St. Michael’s Abbey seminary in Silverado, California. “We commend the beginning and the end of the school year to our Blessed Virgin Mary,” Fr. Sebastian told the incoming students. “So call upon Our Lady to come and put her mantle over this school and protect us during the time that we study here.”

On both campuses, the culmination of the days’ events came when Dr. McLean proclaimed the start of the academic year — to which students responded with loud and sustained applause. In gratitude, they, along with members of the faculty and Board of Governors, then exited their respective ceremonies, joyfully singing “Immaculate Mary” on their way.



“The Real Work of Thomas Aquinas College”

President McLean’s Address at Matriculation 2020

By Michael F. McLean, Ph.D.
President, Thomas Aquinas College

How wonderful it is to see all of you; how wonderful it is to gather together *in person, leaving Zoom behind* to pursue the great work of Catholic liberal education. We welcome you, we thank you for joining us, and we thank your parents for entrusting us with your care, safety, and moral and intellectual formation.

We are in the midst of challenging times. Having to suspend in-person education last spring was painful for faculty and students alike; especially so for our graduating seniors, who had to sacrifice most of the pomp, circumstance, and celebration that normally accompany Commencement, things they had certainly earned and richly deserved.

We move ahead now under various restrictions and protocols, implementing a carefully designed plan which has been reviewed by our faculty, board, medical advisory team, and local health officials. Uppermost in our minds is the health and safety of you students, our faculty and staff, and our friends and neighbors.

These things are obviously important and will be well attended to. But they are for the sake of the real work of Thomas Aquinas College — the formation of your minds, hearts, and souls in imitation of Christ and in accordance with the teaching authority of the Catholic Church.

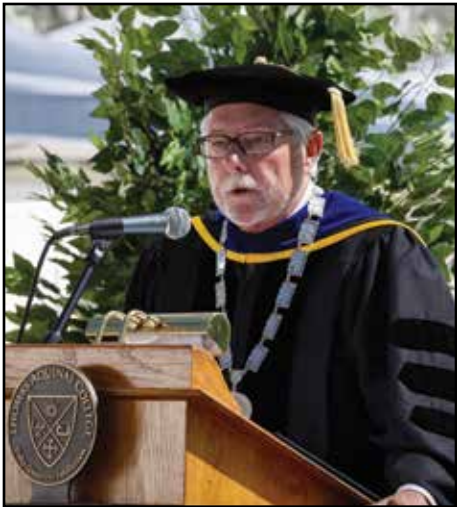
I know that over the last months we

have all, to one degree or other, missed the sacramental life and the life of genuine Catholic worship. This absence has reminded me of something Alexis de Tocqueville wrote in his great work, *Democracy in America* — a work you will consider here in Senior Seminar.

Among many other things, Tocqueville is concerned with religion and its essential role in American democracy. In a remarkable passage, he says that “religion is the first of America’s political institutions.”

“Religion’s principal advantage,” he continues, “is to provide clear answers to fundamental questions” — he means questions of the sort you will pursue here about God’s existence, human nature, man’s ordination to a supernatural life, and the nature of justice and human goodness. Religion also provides a counterweight, he says, to some of democracy’s most dangerous tendencies: “its tendency to isolate citizens from one another, leading them to be concerned only with themselves alone and its tendency to open their souls excessively to the love of material pleasures.”

It is good for us to be reminded of the essential role religion plays in public life and, as a consequence, to reflect on the vital role that Catholic liberal education — the education you freshmen are about to undertake — plays in public life as well. Where religion is to be robust, faith must be robust. For without faith, there is no religion, and without Catholic educa-



“The education you will pursue at Thomas Aquinas College will nourish and strengthen your faith.”

tion, whatever faith there may be is liable to be feeble, uninformed, and difficult to explain and defend.

I say, without hesitation, that the education you will pursue at Thomas Aquinas College will nourish and strengthen your faith. The education here is not undertaken from outside the Faith; it is not structured to criticize or challenge the Faith. Rather, it is undertaken from *within* the Catholic faith — in the words of our founding document and the College’s motto, it is *faith seeking understanding*. Our starting points in the study of theology are the principles, mysteries, and

doctrines of the Catholic faith; our goal is to increase our understanding of these starting points to the extent we can and to deepen our knowledge and love of God.

Beginning with the study of sacred Scripture and culminating in the study of some of the most important parts of the *Summa Theologiae*, your study of theology leads to the contemplation of the central mysteries and doctrines of the Catholic faith. Assuming that this study has been enriched by the sacramental and devotional life provided by the College, it will bring you closer to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and deepen your faith, hope, and charity.

These are the ultimate ends of Catholic liberal education and are what make this education worthy of pursuing for its own sake. In pursuing this education we hearken to Our Lord’s command to “be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.” If Tocqueville is right, however, in pursuing this education we are also preparing to assume our responsibilities as members of a democratic society.

It is good to reflect on the purposes of Catholic liberal education at any time. It is especially good to do so as we begin a new academic year, an academic year which poses its own particular challenges; at a moment when our country is facing its own particular social, political, and moral challenges.

I wish you Godspeed as you set out on, or resume, your journey at Thomas Aquinas College.

Learning in Time of Pandemic

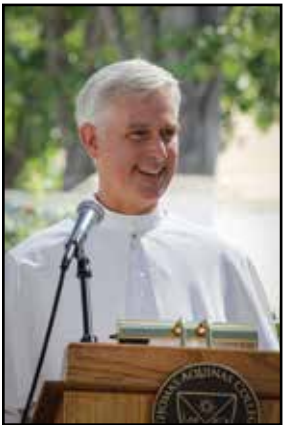
The California Matriculation Remarks of Rev. Sebastian Walshe, O.Praem. (’94)

A college is a place of learning, and in particular this college is a place where truth is sought for its own sake, in the hope of seeking out and perhaps even finding wisdom.

The question on the minds of many people today, however, is whether such learning and seeking can or should take place during a time of pandemic. The grave inconveniences that the teachers and students of Thomas Aquinas College have accepted in order to comply with the mandates imposed by the State of California are a sign that, as a body, this college has answered these questions with a definitive “yes.” We do well to consider why, and that will be the subject of these brief remarks.

C.S. Lewis, in his essay on “Learning in Wartime,” raises this objection: “What is the use of beginning a task which we have so little chance of finishing?” There are so many things that can go wrong. And then again, why take the risk? While there is little danger for the young students at this college, there may be risks that are non-negligible for those who are older or those of weaker constitution.

St. Thomas says in his *De Regno* that if man’s greatest good were a good of the body, namely health, then it would be the office of doctors to rule human society. It is sufficiently obvious to the casual observer that both the antecedent and the consequent of this statement have been adopted by our larger culture. We often hear state-



ments in the public forum which assert without defense that “nothing is more important than our health,” and “the medical professionals will have the last say on our policies.”

But the truth is that there are things more important than our health, namely the goods of the soul; and among the goods of the soul, the highest natural good is the virtue of wisdom, and the highest supernatural good is charity. Therefore, it is not the doctor who has the last say about how we ought to live in a time of pandemic. Health is a good which is instrumental to wisdom and charity, and therefore it should be sought to the degree that it contributes to these ends.

Our Lord certainly thought that it was worth it to lose our life for the sake of charity when He taught, “No greater love has a man than to give up his life for his friends.” And St. Thomas thought the pursuit and the communication of wisdom was something worth risking our life for. He taught that if a man speaks the truth the way he ought over the course of his life, he will almost certainly find himself in danger of death.

There are always risks involved in seeking to do and to be good. And therefore, because we are pursuing the greatest good here at the College, it’s worth great risk. It’s worth a tremendous risk, in fact.

Because Thomas Aquinas College is a college, you are here to pursue wisdom. Because it is Catholic, you are called to live in charity with one another. The two are not unrelated. Aristotle notes that the act most proper to the love of friendship is living together. He also notes that the wise man needs friends not only for pursuing wisdom more effectively, but also for exercising the act of wisdom in common. And despite its numerous and remarkable

“The wise man needs friends not only for pursuing wisdom more effectively, but also for exercising the act of wisdom in common. And despite its numerous and remarkable benefits, Zoom cannot cause you to live together in this way.”

benefits, Zoom cannot cause you to live together in this way. That is why you’re here.

You have taken many risks to be here. You have accepted many hardships to live together, including separation from your families. But it would all be in vain if you failed to pursue wisdom and charity ardently together. It would be a terrible shame.

There are circumstances over which we have no control, which may put an end to this pursuit, but you shall be none the worse off for it. We shall leave to God what is in God’s power, and we commend the beginning and the end of the school year to our Blessed Virgin Mary. She can protect us from anything. So call upon Our Lady to come and put her mantle over this school and protect us during the time that we study here.

We will leave to God what is in God’s power, but let us not refuse to God — or to one another — what is in our power to give.

Note: Rev. Sebastian Walshe, O.Praem. (’94), Professor of Philosophy at St. Michael’s Abbey in Silverado, California, was the College’s 2020 Convocation Speaker on the California campus.

Renew the Face of the Earth

The New England Convocation Homily of the Most Rev. Robert Joseph McManus, S.T.D.

Note: The Most Rev. Robert Joseph McManus, S.T.D., Bishop of Worcester, Massachusetts, was the College’s 2020 Convocation Speaker on the New England campus.

“Lord, send out your spirit and renew the face of the earth.”

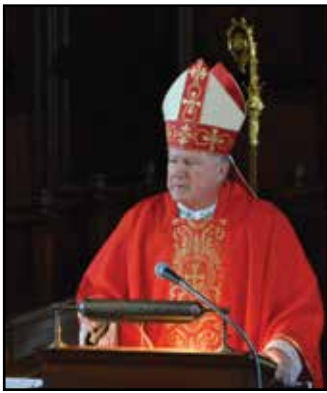
Today, as we inaugurate a new academic year here at Thomas Aquinas College, we do so by celebrating the Votive Mass of the Holy Spirit, imploring the Holy Spirit to renew the face of the earth. This morning, I would like to pose one question to focus my reflections in this homily, and that question is simply this: What role does the Church, who is our mother and teacher, expect us to play in the Spirit’s divine activity of renewing the face of the earth by turning hearts of stone into hearts of flesh, pulsing with the love of Christ, the only savior of the world? Allow me a few minutes to address that question.

We live in a world that is saturated with massive amounts of information that can be quickly accessed with one strike of a computer keyboard; but at the same time we live in a world that is sadly lacking in wisdom. There is a certain theological reason why, in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, the gift of wisdom is listed first in the naming of the seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit, for to be truly wise is to be like unto God Himself.

When I go around the Diocese of Worcester confirming my young people, I tell them that if they really want to be wise, they must learn the correct answers to the three most important questions in life:

- 1. Where have I come from?
- 2. Where am I going?
- 3. How do I get there?

And the correct answers to these three salient questions are extremely important because they are at the heart of the Church’s proclamation of salvation. We come from God; we are going home to God; and we do this by encountering the person of the Crucified and Risen



Christ, by falling in love with Him and by surrendering our intellects and wills to the salvific truth that Christ — and Christ alone — is our Way, our Truth, and our Life. A person may be highly educated and have all types of degrees

after his or her name, but if that person does not know the end for which he was created, then that person cannot be truly wise, which is to say, that person cannot be truly free.

Thomas Aquinas College boldly identifies itself as an authentically Catholic institution that proudly and effectively introduces its students to the great Catholic intellectual tradition. I believe that the Catholic intellectual tradition can serve as a privileged way of assisting the Holy Spirit in renewing the face of the earth because the Catholic intellectual tradition is rooted in the truth that is attainable through the divinely bestowed gifts of faith and reason.

In this morning’s second reading from the Letter of St. Paul to the Ephesians, we heard these powerful and encouraging words: “In Christ you too were chosen; when you heard the glad tidings of salvation, the word of truth, and you believed in it” (Eph. 1:13). This Pauline proclamation begs the question whose answer has an enormous impact for all people for time and eternity. The question is: What is truth?

The Church has for two millennia raised and answered that fundamental question definitively: the Truth is Christ, the Word made flesh. As the Second Vatican Council teaches: “In reality, it is only in the mystery of the Word made flesh that the mystery of man becomes clear. Christ the Lord, Christ the new Adam ... fully reveals man to himself and brings to light his most high calling” (GS, #22).

My dear friends, our culture desperately needs the

“The light of Christ enriches our faith and illuminates our intellects, thereby helping to establish a culture of truth that acknowledges that love is more powerful than hate; that truth will always triumph over falsity; and that for those who love God everything works together for good.”

light of Christ, the light of the new Adam, to dispel the prevailing ignorance and denial of the truth about the human person made in the image and likeness of God, created male and female, and called to a life of communion with others. In short, the light of Christ enriches our faith and illuminates our intellects, thereby helping to establish a culture of truth that acknowledges that love is more powerful than hate; that truth will always triumph over falsity; and that for those who love God, everything works together for good.

For the last several months, Catholic churches across our great country were suddenly closed because of the invisible but terribly lethal coronavirus. As a result, for weeks Roman Catholics could not receive the gift of our Eucharistic Lord in Holy Communion. This has caused deep, spiritual sadness. But we must not allow this prolonged spiritual fasting to be a complete loss. My prayer is that the Catholic community will reclaim a renewed love for the Mass, which is the source and summit of the Christian life. For it is in the reception of Holy Communion that we come to know existentially the profound theological truth that your patron saint, Thomas Aquinas, taught so beautifully in the hymn “O Sacrum Convivium”:

O Sacred Banquet, in which Christ is consumed, the memory of His passion is recalled, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us.

St. Thomas Aquinas, Angelic Doctor of the Church, pray for us who have recourse to thee. Amen.

God bless you!

Convocation 2020



New England



California



New Tutors

California: Dr. Joshua Lim and Dr. Scott Strader ('97)

Dr. Joshua Lim

As the son of Korean immigrants growing up in Diamond Bar, California, Dr. Joshua Lim had a yearning for truth, even in his earliest days. “I wanted to learn everything,” he says. His family attended a Presbyterian church with a Baptist-trained pastor, where he came to believe that if truth is what one seeks, there is only one place to find it — the Sacred Scriptures — a lesson he took to heart during his high school years. “I must have read the Bible for six hours a day,” he recalls. “I thought the only way to the truth was through Scripture, and that was the only truth worth knowing.” Through his devotion to the Word of God, he began to consider a life in ministry.

Around that time he also began to study theology outside the confines of the Bible. “While in college, I came to realize that there were books about the Bible and books about theology that improved my own understanding of the text, insofar as the people who wrote them knew more Greek and Hebrew than I did and were far smarter than I was,” he explains. “I saw that I didn’t need to find all the answers starting from scratch.”

After graduating from the University of California, Irvine, Dr. Lim enrolled at Westminster Seminary and began his theological studies in earnest. Yet rather than fulfill his yearning for truth, the cacophony of differing opinions made truth seem all the more elusive, raising new questions, such as, who has the authority to interpret Scripture definitively? And who has the authority to determine which books of the Bible belong in the canon?

Such theological questions accompanied deeper, philosophical ones. “After reading Kant, I started to wonder if I even *could* know the truth,” he observes. “Functionally, I became an agnostic, and I stopped praying, because I didn’t think I *could* pray.” While attending an academic conference, however, Dr. Lim met a Dominican priest, Rev. Thomas Joseph White, O.P., who helped him find answers to these questions and more in the Catholic faith. Fr. White, in turn, introduced him to Rev. Sebastian Walshe, O.Praem. ('94) — a Norbertine priest, philosophy professor, and TAC alumnus. “I started meeting with Fr. Sebastian for private instruction to be received into the Catholic Church, even while I was still at the Protestant Seminary,” he remembers. “As a result of my conversion, I was excommunicated from my Protestant church, but the seminary still allowed me to graduate with a degree.”

Having been received into the Catholic Church, Dr. Lim went on to earn a master’s degree in theology at the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, D.C. He then entered the doctoral program in theology at the



Dr. Joshua Lim and Dr. Scott Strader make the Profession of Faith and Oath of Fidelity at the 2020 California Matriculation ceremony.

University of Notre Dame, during which time he met his wife, Mary Elizabeth. The couple married in 2015 and now has two sons, Joseph Anselm (3) and John Nicholas (1), and a baby girl on the way.

As he was finishing his doctorate, Dr. Lim applied for a position on the TAC teaching faculty, which led him to read, for the first time, the College’s founding document, *A Proposal for the Fulfillment of Catholic Liberal Education*. Intellectually and professionally, he says, it was a game-changer for him: “After I read the Blue Book, I realized that I would be terribly unhappy anywhere else.”

Today Dr. Lim teaches on the California campus, but in two years, as the student body and faculty grow in New England, he will head east. Still animated by the love of truth that began as a young man, he now gets to continue his search alongside his students.

Dr. Scott Strader ('97)

“Coming back to teach here feels like a homecoming,” says Dr. Scott Strader, a member of the Class of 1997 who is, indeed, returning to his alma mater — but only after a 23-year absence that brought him to Iraq and Japan as an officer of the United States Navy, to Rome as a graduate student, and from agnosticism to the Catholic faith.

Dr. Strader’s return to the College may not have followed a predictable route, but, then, neither did his arrival as a student. Scott grew up as a Baptist Christian in rural Indiana, but he decidedly left his Christian faith as a young teenager.

“The environment in which I was raised generally fostered wonder, but took a distinctly anti-intellectual stance on certain questions about God, man, and nature,” he remarks. At his public high school, he was confronted with “a purely mechanistic account of nature,” which left him “unable to assent to the doctrines of the faith as they had been presented, yet leery of the counterclaims of modern science.” Frustrated by the unanswered and

seemingly unanswerable philosophical questions regarding Christianity, Dr. Strader embraced a deep (if actively seeking) skepticism.

Thus, he enrolled as both a pre-med student *and* a philosophy major at the University of Missouri, where he met an “amazingly philosophical” fellow pre-med student, Lee Rea, Jr. ('97). “Lee told me he had spent one semester at this unique liberal-arts school called Thomas Aquinas College,” Dr. Strader recalls. “And after having many conversations about it, my interest was piqued.”

Although only three semesters away from completing his degree, Dr. Strader left the University of Missouri to become a 23-year-old TAC freshman. Mr. Rea decided to return to TAC as well, joining the same freshman class in the second semester. Although Dr. Strader’s time at the College did not immediately free him of the “deeply imbued skepticism” that fed his agnosticism, it was “immensely formative,” he says, “providing an extended exposure to the perennial philosophy that would bear fruit much later.”

Upon graduating, Dr. Strader accepted a commission in the U.S. Navy, serving first as an aviator during the war in Iraq and subsequently stationed in San Diego, then Japan. After attending War College at Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas, he oversaw the testing of various weapons platforms off California’s Southern Coast before serving for three years as a staff officer for the Commander of Naval Special Warfare Group One in San Diego, who has charge over all West Coast SEAL teams.

During this time, Dr. Strader engaged in a different sort of combat while earning a master’s degree in philosophy at San Diego State University. “I found it necessary to defend the doctrines of the perennial philosophy against unfair attacks leveled by certain faculty members,” he notes. “One significant effect of this was that I returned with growing frequency to the texts of Aristotle and St. Thomas.”

Upon retiring from the Navy in 2015, he met his wife, Brigid (McCarthy '04), and decided to pursue a doctorate in philosophy at the Angelicum. While in Rome, the Straders were blessed with a son, Jack (2), and Dr. Strader increasingly became open to the Catholic faith. “After more prayer and intercession,” he says, “I received the grace to convert.”

As a tutor on the California campus, he now finds his appreciation only deepening for the academic program that played such a vital role in his intellectual and spiritual journey. “Some people say this education may not be for everyone,” he says. “But it seems to me that everyone could stand to benefit from seeking to understand the principles and causes of things.”

New England: Dr. John McCarthy ('11)

“I had Marcus Berquist for his last class, for Junior Theology,” says Dr. John McCarthy ('11), remembering the late Thomas Aquinas College co-founder and tutor whose influence would help lead him to one day become an educator himself. “He had intellectual charity. He did a lot of good through sharing his education. It was inspiring.”



With his first semester as a tutor at Thomas Aquinas College well under way, Dr. McCarthy is now doing his best to follow in Mr. Berquist’s footsteps, passing on his own love of learning to students on the New England campus.

During his undergraduate years, in addition to studying Aquinas’ *Summa Theologiae* with Mr. Berquist, Dr. McCarthy especially enjoyed his time reading Aristotle, particularly the *Physics* and the *De Anima*. “I knew after my sophomore year that I really just wanted to study Aristotle for the rest of my life,” he laughs. After graduating from the College, he taught for a year at Gregory the Great Academy in Elmhurst, Pennsylvania. He then

enrolled in the graduate philosophy program at Boston College and began teaching part-time at Thomas More College of Liberal Arts (TMC) in Nashua, New Hampshire.

While completing his coursework, Dr. McCarthy had the opportunity to study with yet another Berquist: Duane, Mark’s younger brother, who had recently retired from the Philosophy Department at Assumption College in Worcester, Massachusetts. Every Tuesday, Dr. McCarthy and a small group of students would come to Dr. Berquist’s home for an evening of philosophical leisure, during which they went through Aristotle’s *Physics*, line by line.

After completing his doctorate in philosophy, Dr. McCarthy began teaching full-time at Thomas More. TMC offers an integrated Great Books program, and so he was able to teach a range of classes, including Ancient Greek, Euclid, natural philosophy, astronomy, humanities, metaphysics, and logic. He served happily on the faculty there for the next four years. “It is a very fine institution,” he shares candidly. “Pleased as my family and I are to be entering into this new stage, we were sad to leave

that one.”

Dr. McCarthy and his wife, Aja (Cowhig '11), are delighted to be a part of the close-knit community of Thomas Aquinas College, New England. “The tutors are your neighbors, their kids are the neighborhood kids,” he marvels. The McCarthy family — including sons Damien Bosco (5), Xavier Campion (3), Raphael Malachi (1), and another on the way — has taken full advantage of the Connecticut River, just a five-minute drive from campus. “We can fish, we can swim, we can kayak. We’ve enjoyed our time there immensely.”

This year, Dr. McCarthy is leading sections of Freshman Language, Sophomore Mathematics, and Junior Natural Science. He enjoys guiding students through a program that is already familiar to him, while living in the charming and picturesque New England countryside, which has become home for this New Mexico native. Like his Berquist mentors before him, he hopes to instill in young people’s hearts a love for the true, the good, and the beautiful.

“I believe in this education,” Dr. McCarthy avers. “That is why I came back.”

One Program, Two Coasts

Recent Events and Happenings

High School Summer Program

Against long odds, Thomas Aquinas College successfully held its Great Books Program for High School Students this summer — in person and on both campuses. “We are thankful to God for making this year’s program possible,” says Director of Admissions Jon Daly. “We are also grateful to the many people who prayed for the program, and to the members of the College’s Medical Advisory Board, who helped the College to devise plans that safeguarded the health of our students, employees, and the surrounding communities.”

The College did, of course, have to make some minor adjustments to the program: Students were required to test for COVID-19 before coming to campus, for example. Likewise, there were no off-campus excursions this year, and masks and social distancing were required where appropriate. Otherwise, though, the program was very much the same as always — an intellectually challenging, spiritually enriching, *fun* experience of the life at Thomas Aquinas College.

“I think that, after months of quarantine and lockdown, students were just so happy to be on our campuses that no one much minded the changes,” says Mr. Daly. “As usual, they loved to get a taste of the College’s academic program and meet friends from across the country.”



Global Rosary Relay with Bishop Barron

The Most Rev. Robert E. Barron, Auxiliary Bishop of Los Angeles, joined the community of Thomas Aquinas College as its members prayed the Holy Rosary for the sanctification of priests on Friday, June 19, the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

The gathering marked the conclusion of WorldPriest’s eleventh annual Global Rosary Relay, an international prayer chain in which members of the faithful across the world took turns praying a designated set of myster-

ies, thereby encircling the planet in prayer for 24 hours. Thomas Aquinas College was blessed this year to serve as the last leg of the relay, spiritually delivering the world’s prayers to the Blessed Mother from its chapels in California and New England.

Prior to the recitation of the Rosary, Bishop Barron offered Mass from Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity



Chapel on the California campus. “It’s a joy to be with you, a joy to be at this beautiful place,” said His Excellency as he began his homily, focusing on the “center of Jesus’ affectivity,” His Sacred Heart. “Love what He loves,” the Bishop advised. “Rejoice over what He rejoices over. Be sorrowful over what He’s sorrowful over. Exult in the manner of His exultation.”

Tracy Student Center

“It never ceases to amaze me how generous our friends and alumni are,” says Dr. Thomas Kaiser, Dean of Thomas Aquinas College, New England — “or how quickly they respond to our needs.”

In August Dr. Kaiser sent an email to friends and alumni of the College, asking them to help re-open the New England campus by assisting with COVID-19 related expenses. “As part of our re-opening plan, we are renovating the antiquated Tracy Student Center so that it will be a fun, desirable spot for students to gather and socialize without leaving campus,” he explained. “With Convocation Day set for August 22, we must move quickly!”

Within minutes gifts began coming in from many of the College’s faithful supporters, as well as from many first-time benefactors. To date, the College’s friends and alumni have provided funding for 73 items identified on a gift registry of re-opening needs, from espresso machines



Mary O’Reilly (’22) pours a cup of coffee in the newly renovated Tracy Student Center on the New England campus.

and a pizza oven to ping-pong tables, totaling more than \$30,000 in value. Thanks to this outpouring of generosity, the beautiful Tracy Student Center, built in the 19th century, is well on its way to becoming the campus’ new coffee shop, recreation center, and dance hall. To join the effort, please see thomasaquinas.edu/tracy.

Altar-Rail Gate Installed!

As part of the ongoing transformation of Our Mother of Perpetual Help Chapel at Thomas Aquinas College, New England, workers have recently completed the installation of a double gate in the altar rail. Rich in symbolism, the gate speaks to both God’s everlasting nature and the unity of the College’s two campuses.

Embedded in bronze within the two sides of the gate are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, alpha and omega — a symbol which Christians have employed since at least the 4th century to represent God’s eternal nature. The carving recalls the prophecy of St. John: “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “Who is, and Who was, and Who is to come, the Almighty” (Rev. 1:8). It also bears homage to the gate’s counterpart in Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel on the College’s California campus, which, while differing in style from the New England gate, likewise features the same Greek letters.

The gate is the handiwork of craftsman Larry Roux and alumnus woodworker George Krestyn (’03), who also took part in constructing the New England Chapel’s confessionals and altar rail, as well as reconfiguring its pews and floor to create a center aisle. The College is grateful for the ongoing effort that Mr. Roux and Mr. Krestyn have made to make the Chapel a beautiful and fitting space for Catholic worship!



The Greek letters alpha and omega — symbolizing the eternal God — now appear in the altar-rail gates on both campuses.

2021 Report Card

TAC Receives Top Marks for Fidelity, Academics, Affordability

- Thomas Aquinas College provides one of the best undergraduate educations in the country, according to **The Princeton Review**. The education services company features the College in the 2021 edition of its annual guide, *The Best 386 Colleges*. Only about 15 percent of America’s 2,500 four-year colleges are profiled in the publication. Thomas Aquinas College is one of only three Catholic schools recommended by the Cardinal Newman Society to make The Princeton Review’s “Best Colleges” list, with scores of 93 for academics, 93 for quality of life, and 97 for financial aid. Based on its student survey, The Princeton Review additionally reports that, at TAC, “classroom facilities are great,” “class discussions [are] encouraged,” “no one cheats,” and “dorms are like palaces.”



- **College Raptor**, an online consultancy, has included TAC among the “prestigious colleges and universities” in its 2021 “Top 25 Best Colleges” rankings. What distinguishes College Raptor from its various counterparts is that the service aspires to a more personalized approach, offering recommendations based on students’ particular interests and financial needs. Its college Top 25 lists rely entirely on publicly available data about American colleges and universities, including selectivity, first-year retention rates, standardized test scores, student-to-faculty ratios, and graduation rates. The College, the guide observes, “offers only one major: Liberal Arts” and “doesn’t accept direct funding from the government.” Furthermore, TAC “boasts a 91 percent first-year retention rate” and its “student-to-faculty ratio is 11 to 1.”



- The College has claimed a new distinction in the latest **U.S. News & World Report** ranking of American colleges and universities: No. 3 in the U.S. for social mobility. “Economically disadvantaged students are less likely than others to finish college,” the magazine reports. “But some colleges are more successful than others at advancing social mobility.” Only 216 of the country’s colleges are included on the “social mobility” list, and Thomas Aquinas College is the only Catholic institution to crack the top 50. The College is, likewise, one of only two Catholics schools in the top 50 of *U.S. News*’ annual list of the best American liberal arts colleges (No. 40) and, per usual, it has received high marks for its financial aid program, ranking No. 86 on *U.S. News*’ comprehensive list of academic “Best Values.”



- Thomas Aquinas College is once again at the very top of the **American Council of Trustees and Alumni**’s annual rankings of the curricular strength of American institutions of higher learning. “The country needs civic education now, more than ever, yet only 18 percent of schools require a course in U.S. government or history, less than 32 percent require a course in literature, and a paltry 3 percent require a course in economics,” says Nathaniel Urban, ACTA’s associate director of curricular improvement. “Thomas Aquinas College, however, is one of the 23 ‘A’ schools ... that remain committed to a rigorous core curriculum rooted in the liberal arts and Western tradition.” By earning an “A,” Thomas Aquinas College rates among the top 2 percent of American colleges and universities. Moreover, the College is one of only six schools, or the top 0.5 percent nationwide, to earn a perfect score for the strength of its curriculum.



What I Did Over

Students Share the Gift of their Eco

Cecilia Caughron (NE'23)

Cecilia Caughron obtained a unique perspective on the coronavirus this summer while working at a lab testing for the virus. Her uncle, Dr. Samuel Caughron ('96), is president and CEO of MAWD Pathology, a medical laboratory based out of the Kansas City region. When the virus broke out, "he immediately saw the opportunity to open a COVID-19 department in his lab."



Dr. Caughron hired Cecilia to work with COVID-19 samples on a daily basis. Her crew, the first to handle packets shipped to the lab for testing, would sort out specimens and documentation. Sometimes it felt like an "avalanche of work," she says, while other times were a bit more relaxed. MAWD pathology was always prepared, however, at times even taking in samples from other labs that were unable to process tests quickly enough. "I think we were one of the best labs in the area for getting back results in the quickest amount of time," she remarks.

Thomas Doyle (NE'22)

A self-taught computer pro who spent last summer working for a cybersecurity firm, Thomas Doyle put his programming skills to work for Thomas Aquinas College over the summer of 2020. The College will soon debut a new and updated website, and Thomas has played a large role in making that possible. Most of his work these past few months, he says modestly, has consisted of "moving data from the old website to the new website in preparation for its launch."



To that end Thomas has created and redesigned pages and prepared many of the site's new features. He looks forward to the launch of the new site, which he says is better and has a more updated interface than most other university sites, is more responsive, and offers a well-designed, user-friendly layout.

Tyler Getlik (NE'24)

Tyler Getlik spent his summer with *Viri Galilaei*, a group of men who travel to different parishes promoting the traditions of the Catholic Church. The organization was founded a few years back at St. Mary's Parish in Norwalk, Connecticut, where Rev. Greg Markey — now the chaplain of Thomas Aquinas College, New England — was then pastor. This summer, Tyler was at St. Joseph's Parish, also in Norwalk. "We would do a *Missa Cantata* every Wednesday and Sunday, and afterward we would all gather to chant Vespers." To cap off the evenings, the men would go out to a restaurant, discussing interesting points of theology and present issues in the Universal Church.



Tyler was grateful to be associated with *Viri Galilaei*. "It was just a great time to get to know a bunch of very solid, Catholic guys ... all pursuing the same end," he reflects. "We are all trying to grow in our spirituality but also the intellectual life, and it was just such a blessing to have throughout the summer."

Paul Hapsburg (NE'24)



Although quarantined in Rome for several months this summer, Paul Hapsburg was able to make a pilgrimage along the *Camino Santiago*. Starting in Bilbau, a small town in the northeast corner of Spain, he and other pilgrims walked roughly 150 miles over a 10-day period before reaching Santiago. "You would just talk to people about different things," he describes. "And most topics were ordered around Church teaching or the experience of Catholic young people today."

Paul thinks the trek was beneficial to him in every way, most of all spiritually. "When you do a pilgrimage where you have to walk a lot and where you have to overcome your own self-set limitations, I think it is very good because that way you have a much more fulfilling prayer life," he says. "I noticed that while walking and while in pain, I was even at times thankful for the pain ... that way, you have at least a little tiny bit to contribute to Christ's sacrifice."



Benjamin Kasak (CA'21)

Benjamin Kasak never imagined himself working in the mortuary business, let alone enjoying it and finding it so meaningful. The summer after his freshman year, however, the vice president of the East Lawn Mortuary in Sacramento, California, asked him to work as a driver. In the summer of 2019, he was promoted to become part of the company's body-transportation team and an assistant to the funeral directors.



Since that first summer working for East Lawn, Ben has come to realize the enormous importance of his work, meeting with grieving families, helping them sort out their needed paperwork, and transporting their deceased loved one to the funeral home. "That's what I like about it," he reflects. "I like coming into a situation with sadness and chaos and being a person who can try to make the worst moment of someone's life a bit better."

Mikaela Heal (CA'21)



"My designs got a lot of attention from family and friends back home, as well as from classmates on campus," shares small-business owner Mikaela Heal. "So at the end of the summer of 2018, I decided to start an Etsy shop with a few more of my designs, just to see where it would go."

Mikaela's Etsy embroidery business, Tangle and Poke, specializes in hand-stitched hoop art and pouches, often using Catholic imagery — and it took off over the summer of 2020. "The quarantine ended up being exactly the thing to help me grow my business, simply because I had more time to devote to marketing, learning, and designing," Mikaela observes. "Tangle and Poke definitely kept my hands crazy busy all summer long, but the never-ending opportunities for growth and collaboration with other Catholic creative small-business owners has been incredibly encouraging."



Jonathan Phelan (CA'23)

After learning about the opportunity from the College's Career Services Office, Jonathan Phelan applied for an internship with the Southwest Indian Foundation near Gallup, New Mexico. There, he worked as part of a team of young men constructing a national shrine to St. Kateri Tekakwitha, designed by alumnus architect Erik Bootsma ('01). "We had about 15 guys from all over the country — all Catholic, but no two from the same college," Jonathan reports. "We even had two seminarians!"



Jonathan and his team spent most of their time building the shrine's Rosary walk, constructing small adobe structures, each of which represents a mystery. Although the three months of hard labor in the southwestern heat were challenging, Jonathan says he is grateful for the experience: "The project was so worth it. I learned a lot about construction — about consistent, hard work, and functioning on a set schedule."

Dillon Raum (CA'21)

For Dillon Raum, profound discussions about the Great Books did not end with the close of his spring semester at Thomas Aquinas College. Shortly after the end of the school year, he co-hosted a live webinar with *New York Times* best-selling author Dr. Jay Richards on the topic, "What Does 'Conservatism' Mean Today?"

To qualify for this honor, Dillon entered — and won — a contest sponsored by the Intercollegiate Studies Institute, for which he had to produce a one-minute video on the same theme. "We had recently discussed the Lincoln-Douglas debates in seminar at the time, and I became convinced that President Abraham Lincoln is the perfect model for the modern conservative to imitate," Dillon reflects. "I fleshed out my ideas a little more in preparation for the webinar, but for most of the conversation, I ended up thinking on my feet. The questions posed by Dr. Richards were very interesting, and his suggestions very insightful."



Summer Vacation

Education and Plan for their Futures

Tanner Sheffield (NE'23)

With a background in audio engineering, Tanner Sheffield was well equipped to help bring the liturgy to the faithful during the lockdown that began in the spring and continued through much of the summer. “Public Masses were canceled back home, so our parish was seeking a livestreaming solution,” he says. Toward the end of Lent, Tanner teamed up with local pastors in Yuba City, California, and livestreamed Masses through the beginning of July. He also spent much time with the priests outside of Mass: cooking and eating meals, watching movies, and working through *Evangelium Vitae*. He even frequented the gym with one of the clerics, a former power-lifting champion. “It was just a lot of camaraderie with the clergy ... a beautiful, beautiful experience,” he observes.



Later in the summer, Tanner served as a prefect for the College’s High School Summer Program on both campuses. “If these groups of kids, from both the California Summer Program and the New England Summer Program, end up being next year’s Freshman Class, I’ll be ecstatic,” he says. “They were just a really good, mature, enthusiastic group of high school students.”

Jacob Steineke (CA'22)

Sophomore year prepared Jacob Steineke well for his summer internship, which consisted, in part, of discussing the Great Books. Working remotely for the Great Hearts Academy charter schools in Phoenix, he served in the Headmaster Development Department.



“I worked on an online course for training new headmasters,” he recalls. “Specifically, my work was for something called the Virtue Leadership Program, which is designed to apply Aristotelian virtue ethics to the practical, day-to-day scenarios that a Great Heart’s headmaster is likely to face — bridging the gap between the theoretical and the practical.” In addition to building the orientation

section of the headmasters’ course, Jacob joined a few other young scholars in examining the class for possible errors and improvements, which they primarily achieved by means of roundtable discussions.

Regina Terreri (CA'23)

Throughout July and August, Regina Terreri took her first dip into the fashion industry, working in Houston, Texas, as a photographer and graphic designer for Krista Frazier Rentals, a high-end fashion rental company. Each morning, Regina came into the office to work on Krista Frazier’s new company website, designing mockups and getting professional experience in the world of graphic design. In addition, she arranged and photographed advertisements of Krista Frazier designs.



“The job was a ton of fun, and it gave me good experience in graphic design, plus some amazing material for my portfolio,” Regina shares. “It also allowed me to gain some experience in working with real clients for the first time, as well as learning the Adobe Creative Cloud, which is a suite of computer programs used by professional graphic designers.”

Madeleine Thurrott (NE'24)

The Guides of St. Joseph, a Catholic group founded in Scotland, is similar to traditional scouting organizations in France. Madeleine Thurrott, a dedicated member and leader of the group in her native Scotland, spent 10 days this summer attending a Guide leadership camp in Northern France. “Boys and girls who are already leaders go to this camp in order to become better leaders,” she explains. “They take the role of those whom they are teaching.”



Meeting in the lush forests of Port Villez, about an hour north of Paris, the campers had a full schedule. “We had Mass in the morning and talks every day,” Madeleine notes. The afternoons were filled with games, some of which she helped organize. There were also several opportunities to explore the surrounding area. “We had campfires every evening,” Madeleine adds.



Matthew Witzaney (NE'23)

“This year, I wanted to make sure I had a very productive summer,” remarks Matthew Witzaney. Not allowing the quarantine to induce him to lethargy, Matthew maintained a rich intellectual life at his home in rural Saskatchewan. One of his many projects was reading and discussing Aristotle’s *Categories* for a second time, this time with a younger brother. “After going through the *Categories* once already Freshman Year, I could lead the discussion a little bit, but also know where I wanted our discussion to go,” he says.



Matthew also re-read the Old Testament and the majority of the New Testament in preparation for the upcoming academic year. “I knew, going into Sophomore Year, we study a lot of St. Augustine, and I’ve heard that St. Augustine had Scripture memorized and he quotes it a lot,” he comments. Although Matthew’s summer was anything but typical, given the various COVID-19 restrictions, he believes that an advantage of living at home is that he “developed a really good routine ... and I think everybody can thrive on a good routine.”

Tech Support for IBM and the Empire State

Last spring, when the College had to make the quick transition to online learning, it turned to Virtual Service Operations (VSO) of Nokesville, Virginia — a company whose co-founder and COO, John Birch (’92), is the father of two students on the California campus. This summer, when VSO needed extra help to administer a contract with IBM and the State of New York, it turned to various liberal-arts colleges, including TAC, asking the Career Service Office for workers who could provide remote support to Empire State residents.

In all, some 98 TAC students and recent graduates have served on VSO’s nearly 1,000-member team for the IBM-New York project. “The TAC students have been phenomenal,” says Mr. Birch. “About 35 percent of the workers whom we promoted to supervisory positions were TAC students or alumni.”

Another company that had previously worked on the same contract achieved far less satisfactory results. “Hiring from the general population, they had one-eighth of

the productivity we accomplished with liberal-arts students. They also had a 40 percent turnover rate, while we had a 7 percent turnover rate. A liberal-arts education made people exactly eight times more productive than the average population — and that includes current students, not just graduates,” adds Mr. Birch.

“I had a team of about 15 people, and my main job consisted of solving technical issues, advising the people on my team, and aiding in the hiring process,” says Daniel Salinas (’22), who enjoyed the opportunity to work in a professional context alongside his friends. “This job gave me a lot of good experience in management, communication, and getting acquainted with microprograms.”



Adds Angela Goyette (’23), who served as a business analyst, “It was a good learning experience, because I got lots of exposure to the world of customer service, working with people from all different kinds of backgrounds.”

From Poster Child to Freshman

Child Star of Long-Running TAC ad is Member of Class of 2024

“Because the future has never needed the past more than it does today.”

So reads the headline of an advertisement that Thomas Aquinas College has printed many times over the last 15 years. The ad depicts three generations of a family walking across the College’s sunny California campus: The silver-haired grandfather offers sage advice to his son, a young man clasping the hand of his own child — an adorable redheaded boy of about three years, who gazes up admiringly at his forebears.

Hard though it may be to believe, that adorable red-headed boy now stands at close to six feet tall. He is also a member of the Thomas Aquinas College Class of 2024.

In that now-iconic advertisement, which promotes the College’s Legacy Society, Brendan is holding the hand of his father, Admissions Director Jon Daly (’99), who is flanked by the College’s late publications manager, Don Boardman, standing in for Brendan’s grandfather. “Back in those olden days when people read newspapers, we scheduled that ad in many publications,” says Tom Susanka, the College’s director emeritus of gift planning, who commissioned the ad sometime around 2005.

“When we first saw it published in *National Review*, Brendan actually saw it before any of us — he wasn’t reading, but he enjoyed flipping through and looking at pictures,” remembers Jon Daly. “After seeing himself in the picture, he called out from the other room, ‘Mom, I’m in the magazine!’” For his part, Brendan reports that the majority of his sightings of the ad were in the College’s Newsletter. “But one time, I got to see it in the *National Catholic Register*, which I thought was pretty cool!”

For Jon Daly, who has served as the emcee at the College’s Matriculation ceremony every year since becoming admissions director in 2004, announcing Brendan’s name at this year’s event was especially rewarding. “I’ve been working at TAC all of his life, and anyone who works here knows the good in which we’re participating, and we see it day after day, class after class,” he says. “To be able to announce my eldest son’s name in the freshman roll-call, and to know that he will have the opportu-



Then: The late Don Boardman with Admissions Director Jon (’99) and Brendan Daly (’24), from a TAC ad first published in 2005



Now: Brendan and Jon Daly

nity to benefit directly and personally in all the ways that we work for, is truly wonderful.”

The Outdoor Scholar

Although Brendan grew up in a TAC household, it was not always obvious to his parents, both of whom are alumni, that he, too, would attend their alma mater. He did well in school, but he was an outdoorsman first, and the College’s intense academic program did not appeal to him. “I fought the idea of coming to Thomas Aquinas College,” he says.

Then he attended the Great Books Summer Program between his junior and senior years in high school. “It completely changed my view of TAC,” Brendan explains. “When classes started, I was shocked at how interesting and fun the daily classroom discussions were.”

The clinching factor in his decision to come to the College came when he “was able to play sports and hang out with the same kids I was just discussing Boethius with in class.” An outdoorsman, it turns out, can also live and love the life of the mind — in the company of good friends, no less. “I doubt many other colleges, if any, have this amazingly intertwined academic and social life. That

is the reason I decided to apply to TAC.”

Even though some 15 years have passed since that Legacy Society ad was first published — and Brendan has graduated from poster child to freshman — Mr. Susanka remains confident that “the Brendan Daly ad has not yet run out of steam.” Efforts have been made, over the years, to update or replace it, but none has passed muster. This depiction of one family in three generations has demonstrated in a very real sense that “the future has never needed the past more than it does today.”

Brendan Daly has been promoting Thomas Aquinas College from his earliest days. For the next four years — and for the rest of his life — he will get to benefit from the fruits of his efforts.

In Memoriam

Anthony J. Buhl, 1938–2020

Anthony J. Buhl passed away after a hard-fought, 10-year battle with cancer on June 22. His good friend, Joan Gonsier, reports to the College that he died well and peacefully.

“In fact, we all should be so blessed,” says Thomas J. Susanka, the College’s director emeritus of gift planning. “Anthony recently had received Extreme Unction and Viaticum, had been visited in the morning by his parish priest from St. Augustine Church, and just 45 minutes before his death had been blessed by Rev. Jason Asselin. Father had been Anthony’s student at St. Cloud State University. Joan said that Fr. Asselin was truly like a son to Anthony and his wife, Audrey.”

Dr. Buhl was born November 9, 1938, in Browerville, Minnesota. Upon graduating from high school, he served in the U.S. Army from 1959-1961 and was stationed in Texas, California, and lastly Korea. He married Audrey Ann Schluender on June 26, 1965.

After earning his master’s degree from St. Cloud State and his doctorate from Oregon State University, Dr. Buhl worked as a professor at North Dakota State in Fargo, Missouri State University in Maryville and finally at St. Cloud State University. He was a dedicated teacher, an avid photographer, and a devoted husband and friend known for his boldness in his faith.

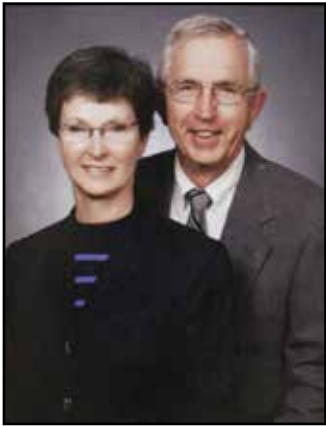
Dr. and Mrs. Buhl were faithful contributors to Thomas Aquinas College for many years, having come to learn of it through their friends Donna and Roy Steichen. After his wife died several years ago, Dr. Buhl established the Anthony and Audrey Buhl Endowment for Student Financial Aid. A member of the Legacy Society, he made

the College the primary charitable beneficiary in his estate plans.

“I spoke many times with Anthony over the years. He loved philosophy, the subject he taught at St. Cloud,” recalls Mr. Susanka. “He had grown discouraged about the decline in faculty and student commitment to the truth, and his eagerness for Thomas Aquinas College was kindled by what he was sure was its deep and fruitful concern to know and teach the truth. He was buoyed up by the stories of our many priestly and religious vocations.”

Determined to make the future of Thomas Aquinas College students as much as possible part of his legacy, Dr. Buhl opted to stay with a friend, rather than at a convalescent home, during his final days, in order to protect his estate. In lieu of flowers, he asked that friends and loved ones make a gift in his name to the College.

“All of us who have known Anthony were edified by his sacrifice, his commitment to the College, and his deep admiration for its mission and curriculum,” says Mr. Susanka. “He has been generous to our young people through annual and Endowment gifts. He has prayed for us during his many, many hours of Eucharistic devotion. He offered his suffering for us. So he seems now in his death to merit our even greater gratitude.”



In Memoriam

Anne Richardson — November, 2019
Benefactor

Elfriede Monuszko — April 20, 2020
Legacy Society member

Dr. Peter V. Sampo — May 28, 2020
Founding president of Magdalen College of the Liberal Arts

John-Cyril Patrick Hanisko — June 7, 2020
Legacy Society member

Fred Arthur (’96) — June 13, 2020
Alumnus

Anthony J. Buhl — June 22, 2020
Legacy Society member

Bea Smalley — July 25, 2020
Benefactor

Dorothy Olsen — August 22, 2020
Legacy Society member

Joanne Marie Thureau — August 25, 2020
Mother of John Paul (’14) and Mark (’18)

Alicia Zeiter — August 26, 2020
Mother of Zach (’21)

Joan Kelsey — September 3, 2020
Benefactor

Billie John Ellis — September 17, 2020
Benefactor

Martin Scheller Morehart — October 8
Benefactor

David Ziegert — October 11
Father of Amelia (’07)

“Juggling 10 Balls at Once”

Philosopher and Pilot: Alex Potts (’14)

Having recently completed his flight training for the Apache helicopter, U.S. Army Warrant Officer Alex Potts (’14) is now stationed in Katterbach, Germany, where he will spend the next three years training with European forces before his first deployment. “Germany’s been great so far!” he writes. “Beautiful farmland and pleasant locals. I’m living in the very center of Europe, so I’m excited to travel to see the different areas where the authors we read at TAC were writing from.”

Mr. Potts joined the Army through its Street to Seat program, through which servicemen quickly move through boot camp, warrant officer school, and then flight school. He spent most of the last year on flight training, culminating in the arduous task of mastering the Apache.

“The Apache is the helicopter with all the attack systems, so you not only have to learn how to fly, you have to learn how to fly and operate all the systems on board,” Mr. Potts explains. “You have to be able to manipulate all four of your limbs in a coordinated manner, while at the same time looking at your intended spot of landing, doing mental calculations about how far or how close you need to be; you’re trying to manage your altitude, your airspeed; you’re listening to five different radios at the same time; and you have a helmet-mounted eyepiece over your right eye showing all this information, such as

your engine torques, your direction, where the aircraft is heading, the velocity you’re going at, what your copilot is looking at. It’s like a circus. It’s like juggling 10 balls at once.”

In other words, it’s his dream come true. “I love it. I thrive on it, I really do,” he says. “It’s a fantastic experience, and when you get out of that cockpit at the end of the day, it’s a real sense of fulfillment.”

Serving his country, Mr. Potts adds, likewise fulfills a longing he has had since his first encounter with the dialogues of Socrates. “Reading about the duties that Socrates placed on man to one’s God, to one’s family, and to one’s country — that really stuck with me,” he says. “I thought to myself: I’m an able-bodied man, a healthy young man. I should put in that service to my country as a duty or an obligation, a form of justice for everything that my country gives me. That may sound a little bit cheesy, but it’s actually the truth.”

Indeed, his philosophical background informs the notion of duty that drives his service. “It helped me to better understand the rights, the freedoms, the values that we’re fighting for in America, and I think that makes you a more effective soldier in the end,” he argues. Likewise, he has found the intellectual life of the College to be an ideal preparation for the demands of the Armed Forces. “There was a sense of discipline in the intellectual



life at Thomas Aquinas College which I think very much carries over into the military, which has discipline permeating throughout the entire structure.”

Those years of learning “sparked a love,” Mr. Potts continues, which will remain with him for life: “I still read the same books, and I still pray to the same God.” A philosopher as well as a pilot, he has recently begun an online graduate degree in philosophy with Holy Apostles College and Seminary — to occupy whatever time he has left when not flying helicopters.

Alumni Updates

Graduates Put Faith in Action

Ken May (’03)

A cybersecurity expert and CEO, Ken May (’03) has authored a new book, detailing how history’s great thinkers provide invaluable insights into some of the most critical technological challenges of our times. In *The Art of Hacking: Ancient Wisdom for Cybersecurity Defense*, Mr. May explores the teachings of the greatest minds in a wide range of fields — from Sun Tzu to Machiavelli, from Thucydides to Musashi — and how these can help small businesses and information technology professionals shield computer and data networks from attack.



Citing age-old insights on warfare, politics, martial arts, history, and strategy, *The Art of Hacking* combines ancient philosophy with contemporary, practical advice. “The College’s curriculum was a driving force in my decision to write the book,” Mr. May observes. “Thucydides is in the book, as is Machiavelli. I was mostly focused on texts working with warfare, political strategy, and martial arts. I do wish dear St. Thomas wrote more on martial arts ...”

Mr. May is chief executive officer of Swift Chip, Inc., an IT solutions firm serving more than 400 small- and medium-sized businesses in California. He is also an experienced educator, serving as a community instructor for SANS, the globally leading cybersecurity educational organization, where he trains military, intelligence, and Fortune 500 teams in ways to protect the country’s IT infrastructure. “The teachings of the greatest minds of the world have endured through countless generations,” he says. “The tools and techniques may change, but the primary principles remain the same.”

Five Transitional Deacons!

The last issue reported the joyful news of the May 2 ordination of **Rev. Mr. Ryan Truss (’16)** to the transitional diaconate for the Archdiocese of St. Louis. Since then, the College has learned of four more ordinations — bringing up to a grand total of five for the year:

- The Most Rev. Gino Reali, Bishop of Porto-Santa Rufina (Italy) conferred Holy Orders upon **Br. Matthew Maxwell (’08)** in Rome on May 17. Br. Matthew also

took perpetual vows as a member of the Miles Christi religious community. He is now finishing his theology studies at Rome’s Pontifical University of the Holy Cross in preparation for his priestly ordination in 2021.

- On the morning of May 22 at San Carlos Cathedral, the Most Rev. Daniel F. Garcia, Bishop of Monterey, ordained **Rev. Mr. David Allen (’10)** and two fellow seminarians to the transitional diaconate. Alas, owing to COVID-19 restrictions, Deacon Allen — like his other fellow alumni *ordinandi* — had to receive his sacrament in an all-but-empty church.

- Some 20 years after receiving the Sacrament of Baptism during his freshman year at Thomas Aquinas College, **Br. John Winkowitsch, O.P. (’04)** received the Sacrament of Holy Orders on September 19 at the hands of the Most Rev. Alexander K. Sample, Archbishop of Portland in Oregon. Less than a month earlier, Br. John completed his entrance into the Dominican Order by professing solemn vows.



Br. John Winkowitsch, O.P. (’04)

- One of three alumni seminarians studying for the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, **Michael Masteller (’13)** was originally scheduled to be ordained to the transitional diaconate on May 23, but the Ordination Mass was twice postponed due to COVID-19 concerns. At last, the Most Rev. Alejandro D. Aclan, Auxiliary Bishop of Los Angeles, ordained him on October 10 in the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels.

Dr. Kathleen Sullivan (’06)

After serving for the last few years as a part-time lecturer at Christendom College, **Dr. Kathleen Sullivan (’06)** has been named a full-time faculty member in the school’s Department of English and Literature.



“From middle school students, to undergraduates, to graduate students,” notes the Christendom website, Dr. Sullivan “has taught literature, writing, and rhetoric courses at a variety of levels.” Beginning this fall, she now teaches the

Virginia-based college’s core literature courses as well as English Victorian Literature, Children’s Literature of the 19th Century, and English Romantic Literature.

Dr. Sullivan holds a master’s degree in English from the University of Dallas and a doctorate from the Catholic University of America. During her graduate-school years, she was a perennial presence on Thomas Aquinas College’s California campus, where she served several times as the beloved head women’s prefect for the High School Summer Program.

Congratulations to Dr. Sullivan on her new job — and to Christendom on an excellent hire!

Shrine to St. Kateri Tekakwitha

More than a year after the groundbreaking ceremony, work continues apace on a forthcoming shrine to St. Kateri Tekakwitha just south of Gallup, New Mexico, designed by alumnus architect **Erik Bootsma (’01)**. Sponsored by the Knights of Columbus, the Southwest Indian Foundation, and the Diocese of Gallup, the shrine will include a chapel, a museum, and an outdoor Rosary walk consisting of 30 stations housed in adobe niches.

Several other members of the College community are also involved in the project. “**Patrick Mason (’03)** with the Knights of Columbus nationally is coordinator on that side, and **Jeremy Boucher (’03)** is managing the project on the ground,” notes Mr. Bootsma, adding that Bill McCarthy — chief executive officer of the Southwest Indian Foundation; husband of **Cathy (Short ’77)**; and father of **Brigid (Strader ’04)**, **Therese (Monnereau ’05)**, **Erin (Feeney ’07)**, **John (’11)**, **Aileen (’14)**, and **Liam (’18)** — “is spearheading the whole project.”

Designing the shrine marks a professional change of pace for Mr. Bootsma, a classical architect who ordinarily specializes in church designs and renovations. “This is really unique because it is not necessarily purely liturgical, but devotional,” he observes. “It’s a good opportunity for creativity and to do something really great within [Native American] traditions.”



Erik Bootsma (’01)

“There are Moments in a Person’s Life that are Decisive”

An Interview with Rev. Sebastian Walshe, O.Praem. (’94)

Note: Rev. Sebastian Walshe, O.Praem. (’94), a professor of philosophy at St. Michael’s Abbey Seminary, was the 2020 Convocation Speaker at Thomas Aquinas College, California.

It is not often that the College has a religious priest to celebrate Convocation. Would you distinguish the differences between the religious priesthood and the clerical / diocesan priesthood, and how it is that you discerned your vocation to the one rather than the other?

I am a little embarrassed to admit this, but when I joined the Norbertine abbey, I did not know the difference between the diocesan and the religious priesthood. I simply had two criteria: I wanted a place that was orthodox and where the men were serious about holiness. Those were my only two criteria, and wherever I found those, I was planning on trying.

While I wasn’t aware then of the distinction between the two kinds of priesthood, I can tell you that now. A religious priest is marked by three vows: obedience, chastity, and poverty. While every diocesan priest makes a promise of chastity and of obedience, they do not make a promise of poverty.

Another difference is that the diocesan priest’s promise is not the same thing as the solemn vow that the religious priest makes. A solemn vow is made to God such that one is directly responsible to God for that vow. A promise, on the other hand, is made either to the bishop or to the Church. That promise is in some way to God, too, but the point is that the Church has the authority to dispense a diocesan priest from his promises. For example, there can be married priests in the Roman rite through the Anglican Ordinariate.

In the early days of the Church, there was only the vow of obedience. A superior assumed that if a priest were obedient, he would remain chaste and poor as well. Eventually, the other vows had to be made explicit, and by the time of St. Thomas Aquinas, the three vows were pretty well explicated. But even he mentions that the central vow of religious life is obedience.

“They see, some for the first time, an authentically Catholic environment, an authentically Catholic education, an authentically Catholic world — even if they’re not Catholic — and they see how the world could be if everyone were practicing their faith.”

What drew you to St. Michael’s Abbey, in addition to the orthodoxy and holiness you found there?

The Abbey also had a community life, which is another difference between the diocesan priesthood and the religious priesthood. Religious, for the most part, live in the context of a community for their whole lives. There were really great young men that I was in formation with in the seminary, and really great priests. So that community life was very important.

Only after I joined the Abbey did I discover our order’s particular charism. St. Norbert and his confreres were dedicated to the reform of the clergy, a movement Pope St. Gregory VII had initiated at the end of the 11th century. While St. Bernard of Clairvaux spearheaded the religious side of that reform, St. Norbert spearheaded the clerical side.

At that time, there were no clerical seminaries. (St. Charles Borromeo, in the 16th century, was the first to mandate clerical seminary formation.) New priests were mostly trained by older priests, many of whom lived high on the hog, with concubines and, if you read the writings of St. Peter Damien, there were all sorts of practices that were satanic. There was real corruption.



The point of the Gregorian reform was to encourage priests to live once again in common, to practice authentic poverty and chastity, to be serious about holiness, and to celebrate worthily the sacred mysteries. For St. Norbert it was all about priests worthily celebrating the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass; that was his purpose. The Eucharist is central to our charism, as is clerical reform.

One other feature of our life at the Abbey is that we pray all seven hours of the Office. Most religious communities say five of the hours of the Office, but we say all seven. This is because the Divine Office is the extension of the Mass throughout the day. We begin every day early with the Divine Office, followed immediately by Mass; and we end every day with a Holy Hour in the evening. The Eucharist is the beginning and end of every day. The centrality of the Eucharist in our Norbertine life at St. Michael’s is the key to our way of life.

You are the Prefect for Studies at St. Michael’s seminary and teach philosophy there. Why is it necessary for seminarians to learn philosophy?

Most of the errors in theology are actually founded in philosophy; errors in philosophy result in reading Scripture through the wrong lens. You have to start with the correct foundations in reason and nature in order to be able to not misunderstand or distort divine revelation.

In addition, philosophy ends up being particularly fruitful when applied to theology. To give a simple example: Logic is a tool for the mind, and the reason you need that tool is because there are many things that are very difficult to see or very far away from the human mind. I like to compare definition (which is a tool of logic) to a microscope. A definition makes something that’s vague into something very distinct; just as with a microscope, logic helps you see it more distinctly.

I also compare syllogism and demonstration to a telescope because just as it allows you to see what is very far away, reasoning with syllogisms takes you to truths that are very far away from their principals. And the things considered in theology are farthest away from our sense knowledge, so that logic is more necessary in theology than anywhere else.

The same is true with the other parts of philosophy. Take a simple example: the Resurrection account in St. Luke’s Gospel. At one point Jesus comes and stands before the Apostles, and they’re afraid; they think they’re seeing a ghost. He says to them, “Feel my hands and see that I am not a ghost; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.” So, He has them touch Him. He then ate in order to show them that He had a real, human body.

Now you might say to yourself, “How did the eating help their unbelief? The sense of touch is more certain and would tell you that He is not a spirit or ghost much more readily than seeing Him eat.” The answer is that what they discovered from touching Jesus was that He had a body. What they needed to see was that it was a body that was a *living body*, informed by the soul. In philosophy we learn that the soul is not only the mover but

also the form of the body. Therefore, the Apostles could have had the wrong impression, thinking that Jesus’ soul was just moving His body, but not informing it and making it alive. Jesus had to exercise a properly living activity, namely eating, as a way of certifying that not only was His body standing there before them, but that it was a *living body*. Philosophy explains all that.

You have recently authored two books. What are they about?

The first, *Secrets from Heaven: Hidden Treasures of Faith in the Parables and Conversations of Jesus*, is a collection of talks I’ve given at priestly retreats on the Scriptures. I was asked so often to publish these talks that I finally decided to see if Catholic Answers, where I regularly do radio shows, would be interested. Their first response was that this really wasn’t their line of work; they do apologetics, not Scripture. But on second thought, their acquisitions department decided to publish it, and it’s doing great. They even want me to record an audio version.

The other book is titled *Understanding Marriage and Family: A Catholic Perspective*. The origin of this one is an apologetics course I began teaching five years ago for the seniors at our high school. While the typical apologetics subjects came up in these classes — the primacy of the Pope, the Eucharist, the Blessed Virgin Mary, Scripture and tradition — *by far* the students were more interested in the Church’s teaching on marriage and family. On these matters, their friends and all that they were getting from the culture were at odds with their Catholic education. They wanted a defense of the Church’s teaching. So, I wrote up a text and, over the years, refined it based on the back and forth in the classroom, and added some objections and responses. It has been wildly successful from my students’ standpoint. They love it and feel very confident that they can defend the Church’s teaching and answer objections to it.

You often serve as chaplain for the High School Summer Great Books Program on the College’s California campus. Would you describe the role you play in that program and your impressions of it?

My role is to be a spiritual father to the students and to take care of their essential spiritual needs. They need to see that the life of the Catholic faith is essential and integral to the identity of Thomas Aquinas College. If there were a Summer Program without a priest who was intensely involved, they would misunderstand how life is at the College. So my fundamental role is to offer Mass each day, hear confessions, and offer spiritual direction. I also try to play sports with them and be involved in their other activities.

Some tremendous conversions take place during the Summer Program. You might think, “Well, it’s just two weeks in a person’s life.” But there are moments in a person’s life that are decisive, and I’ve found that the College’s Summer Program provides a decisive moment for many young people. They see, some for the first time, an authentically Catholic environment, an authentically Catholic education, an authentically Catholic world — even if they’re not Catholic — and they see how the world could be if everyone were practicing their faith. Taken together with the spirit of deep sacrifice and charity among the prefects, all of that makes a deep impression. The two weeks of that Summer Program can plant a seed that is a lifetime in growing.

Is there anything you would like to add?

Just some words of gratitude. I never could have imagined when I was a student here that I would preside at Convocation one day, and I am extremely grateful that President McLean would even think of me. I have such a fondness for so many here at the College, from Dr. McLean all the way down to six of the new freshmen at the College who graduated this year from our high school. For me, it has been a real blessing to be here.

What the Church Can Offer the World ...

An Interview with the Most Rev. Robert Joseph McManus, S.T.D.

Note: The Most Rev. Robert Joseph McManus, S.T.D., Bishop of Worcester, Massachusetts, was the 2020 Convocation Speaker at Thomas Aquinas College, New England.

In your homily at this year’s Convocation Mass on our New England campus, you focused on the words of the Psalmist, “renew the face of the earth.” What part can Catholic education play in this important calling?

What the Church has in the Catholic intellectual tradition is a realization that all education is a journey in pursuit of the truth. Christ Himself said in the Gospel that the truth will set you free. And that is what the Church, in her academic institutions, can offer contemporary society: the use of faith and reason.

Additionally, what is fundamentally important in these times is that an education provide a proper understanding of what it means to be human. Many of the problems in our secular society are the result of people in politics and in education working with a faulty anthropology. The Church must re-introduce into education — and even into the public square, in terms of formation of conscience — an understanding of what it means to be human: We are created in the image and likeness of God. There is a fundamental, metaphysical difference between what it means to be a man or a woman. And we have a dignity that is not bestowed upon us by society, or culture, or the government, but by the very creative hand of God.

John Cardinal Wright, who was the first Bishop of Worcester, said that sometime after the Second Vatican Council a collective amnesia settled over the Church, and, I think — broadly speaking — over society. The Church, particularly through the institutions of Catholic education, can help restore the public’s understanding of truths about fundamental realities. And the acquisition of truth leads to true wisdom, as well as to the motivation to renew the face of the earth.

How well do you think Catholic schools are prepared to undertake this task?

It varies. Our secular colleges and universities have become very left wing in their approach to learning, which has become so trendy and politically correct. Unfortunately, this secular worldview has crept into some of our Catholic institutions of higher learning, too. However, there’s a very interesting phenomenon going on in the United States at the present time, and I presume in other parts of the world. It’s the formation of higher institutions of learning such as Thomas Aquinas College.

Here in New England alone we have several colleges that are authentically Catholic, that introduce their students to the Catholic intellectual tradition in a very broad way, based on the Great Books. These colleges are very much carrying out what the Church expects from institutions of higher learning that claim to be Catholic. Colleges such as Thomas Aquinas present Catholic doctrine in an intelligent, reasonable, and complete way.

Some Catholic universities that have had a great reputation in the past have squandered their Catholic identity in pursuit of a more secular approach. But there is a corrective to this problem, and we see an example of that corrective in California and in Western Massachusetts at Thomas Aquinas College.

What were your impressions of your time on campus?

My first impression was on Saturday morning, when we arrived on campus. We went into the dining hall where the students were having their breakfast, and I was just immediately impressed by how friendly everyone was. “Good morning, Your Excellency, welcome to the College.” And there seemed to be a great level of camaraderie among the young men and women. There was a lot of laughter, a lot of happy banter. I was very impressed.

On the other hand, during the celebration of the Mass, there was a level of appreciation of the sacred, of



The Most Rev. Robert Joseph McManus, S.T.D., Bishop of Worcester, Massachusetts, and Chaplain Rev. Greg Markey stand outside Our Mother of Perpetual Help Chapel on New England Convocation Day.

what we were celebrating in the Holy Eucharist. So overall, I was very, very impressed. And even at the Matriculation ceremony, I was impressed with how the young people — freshmen in college — comported themselves in a very dignified and true way.

Last year’s Convocation speaker, the Most Rev. Mitchell Rozanski — then Bishop of Springfield, Massachusetts — cited polls showing Massachusetts as the second-least religious state in the country. How would you characterize the local environment for Catholic institutions: friendly, hostile, indifferent?

With American society becoming so rapidly secularized, it’s not an exaggeration to say that our religious freedom is being called into question. The *New York Times* recently ran a full-page article about Judge Amy Coney Barrett in which the anti-Catholicism was barely veiled. It reminded me of Daniel Patrick Moynihan’s remark that the only respectable prejudice left in the United States is anti-Catholicism. We see it, especially, in some of these hearings for public offices. In one case, Kamala Harris suggested that a candidate was unsuitable for the federal bench because he belonged to the Knights of Columbus. It’s outrageous.

To say that there is no attempt to curtail our religious freedom, or that such a threat doesn’t exist, is terribly naive. Just listen to the language. Some politicians now speak only of “freedom of worship,” as opposed to “freedom of religion.” The First Amendment’s free-exercise clause guarantees much more than just the freedom to go to Mass on Sunday. It means that we can seek, with an informed conscience, to work for public policy that is in the service of the common good.

“You cannot be a Catholic in any authentic sense without regular attendance at the Eucharist, in person, with the community worshipping as the Body of Christ.”

This interview is taking place before the presidential election and will be published afterward. Whatever the result, the outcome will likely exacerbate the country’s polarization. What role can the Church play in healing these divisions and fostering the shared sense of common good that’s essential for the function of our political order?

The Church can be instrumental in this regard because of our tradition of dialogue. The Church does not approach truth as either/or, but both/and. And so what we can do — and what the Church has done throughout the ages — is follow the example of the College’s patron, Thomas Aquinas. He took the best of ancient Greek wisdom and was able to use that as a type of lens through which to understand the Word of God and the use of our reason. And look at what it’s produced: one of the greatest bodies of learning in the history of Western civilization!

The Church has a time-tested approach, one of trying to glean from the context of a particular time in history all that is true, good, and beautiful — and to see all of that

in the light of divine revelation. In that way, the Church is very broad in its outreach, trying to reconcile people with the truth and with each other.

What long-term effects will this past year — the pandemic, the deaths, the quarantines, the lockdowns, the social distancing — have on the life of the faithful?

The Catholic Church throughout the country has done a great job of keeping in touch with the faithful during very unsettling and uncertain times. But my fear now is that what helped us tremendously when the churches were closed — the ability to livestream Masses, creative ways to celebrate the Sacraments of Penance and the Anointing of the sick — may now undermine our faith. If this goes on too long, people can become terribly comfortable in thinking that attending Mass online is the same as coming together and worshipping in community or receiving the Body and Blood of Christ in Holy Communion. So I think we bishops are very concerned about the slow return of Catholics to Mass.

The Catholic moral tradition has always taught that to intentionally miss Mass on Sunday through one’s own fault is a mortal sin. However, the Church also says that if you’re ill, or if there’s a legitimate reason for missing Mass on Sunday, that is not a sin. So it is permissible for people to stay home and watch the Mass on television should they have underlying medical conditions that may put them at risk, or if they are of an older age. But people who go out to dinner, go shopping, go to movies, or participate in any recreation — they are in a position to attend Mass in person on Sunday. We need to start getting people back into church in person.

What can the Church do to make that happen?

It’s a question of reminding people of the centrality of the Eucharist in the Catholic life. The Church is born of the Eucharist. You cannot be a Catholic in any authentic sense without regular attendance at the Eucharist, in person, with the community worshipping as the Body of Christ. We need to do the work of reminding people of what the Eucharist is, what a great privilege it is for us Catholics to be able to receive, to go to Mass every day, particularly on Sundays. It makes a huge difference in our spiritual lives. If we refrain from reception of the Eucharist, we are consigning ourselves to spiritual malnourishment.

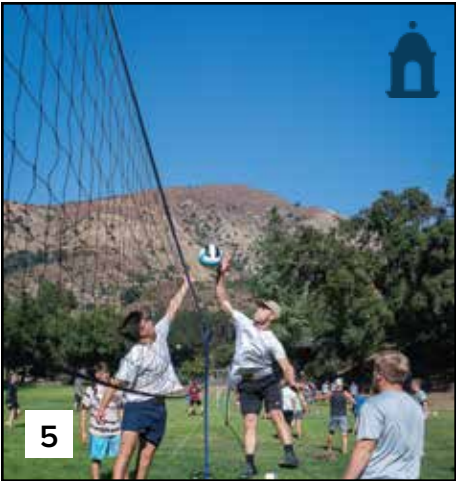
The College has been blessed with a large number of vocations over the years, with about 10 percent of alumni going into the priesthood or the religious life. Do you have any advice for our students who are discerning vocations?

I always tell young people discerning vocations that, if it is your call, you can expect to enter into a life that is full of joy and serenity of spirit, that the faithful will invite a priest to enter into their lives at a depth that sometimes they won’t even permit their own spouses. That’s not because we have any particular talent; it’s because Catholics look at priests as bringing into their lives the love of Christ and the Church, which will lead them home to a place in heaven.

I also always say to young people: The seminary or the novitiate is the place you go to *discern* whether, in fact, God is calling you. You’re not going to find that out by standing on the outside looking in. So, with the grace of God, you take the leap.

Finally, young people thinking about the priesthood or the religious life should put themselves in a context where they are likely to meet and live with other people who are discerning vocations. That makes it a lot easier. That is part of why places such as Thomas Aquinas College, which pass on the Faith with integrity, do a great service for the Church and for our young people — and that’s why I think so many young people from these colleges are embracing the priesthood and the religious life.

Student Life



1. A Rosary procession for Our Lady's protection against COVID-19 begins at the front door of Our Mother of Perpetual Help Chapel. 2. The newly renovated Tracy Student Center hosts a V-Day dance in honor of the nation's veterans. 3. Members of the TAC Surf Club take to the Ventura beach early one September morning. 4. Hikers pose for a group shot after surveying woodlands near the New England campus. 5. Students clash in the annual fall volleyball tournament ... 6. ... and a tug-of-war at the All-College Picnic.

St. Vincent de Paul Lecture and Concert Series*

Endowed by Barbara and Paul Henkels
Highlights from the Last Quarter



California

- Opening Lecture: Dr. Anthony P. Andres
Tutor, Thomas Aquinas College
“Is Logic a Necessary Part of a Liberal Education?”
- October Lecture: Dr. John F. Nieto
Tutor, Thomas Aquinas College
“132 Arguments Against Rock Music”
- Fall All-College Seminars
September: The Death of Ivan Ilyich, by Leo Tolstoy,
November: “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” and “I Have a Dream,”
by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



New England

- Opening Lecture: Dr. Michael A. Augros
Tutor, Thomas Aquinas College
“Mathematics and Liberal Learning”
- September Lecture: Dr. Andrew Dinan
Associate Professor of Classics
Ave Maria University
“In Defense of the Aeneid”
- Fall All-College Seminar
Gunnar's Daughter, by Sigrid Undset
- October Lecture: Dr. Carol A. Day
Tutor Emerita, Thomas Aquinas College
“Lining Up Numbers: The Place of Books 7-9 in Euclid's Elements”



*Text and/or audio from select lectures is available at thomasaquinas.edu/lectures

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