

# A Year for Gratitude

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

## Dear Friends of Thomas Aquinas College,

In August 2020, as Thomas Aquinas College began its 50<sup>th</sup> year in operation, the College community was filled with gratitude. We had first opened our doors to students in the midst of a great cultural upheaval, and 50 years later we found ourselves opening them in the midst of a worldwide pandemic. Both then and now, God provided His loving protection to our community — existing on two campuses today — and by His grace, the College has thrived. We thank and praise God for His providential care!

Our students and faculty are also to be thanked for the many sacrifices they made to ensure that we could hold in-person classes for the whole of the 2020-2021 academic year. From wearing masks and going to class outdoors to staying close to campus and forgoing visits home at Thanksgiving, they cooperated beautifully and with good cheer.

Our benefactors, too, have been steadfast in their charitable giving during the 2021 fiscal year, making it possible for so many of our students to benefit from the life-changing program of genuine Catholic liberal education that we offer. May God reward these generous souls!

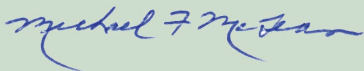
Because of the pandemic, the year was less eventful than most, but it closed with joyful celebrations for two classes of graduates — the Class of 2021 and their immediate predecessors who had been prevented by the pandemic from taking part in our customary commencement exercises.

In addition, four more of our alumni were ordained to the priesthood: one for the Diocese of Monterey, one for the Archdiocese of St. Louis, one for the Western Province of the Dominican Order, and one — our first — for our home diocese, the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. They join the ranks of our alumni priests, now totaling 78. May the Lord bless them all and keep them ever-faithful to Himself and to the Church.

In the pages that follow you will find highlighted some of the achievements of the College and its alumni in Fiscal Year 2021. The attached financial statements will give you a more thorough account of our financial position, detailing our balanced budget, adequate cash flow, and successful fundraising efforts.

Our prosperity has been made possible by your generosity, which in turn has helped make possible the good works of our alumni. May God, Who cannot be outdone in generosity, bless you abundantly. Thank you for all you do for Thomas Aquinas College and our students.

Sincerely,



Michael F. McLean, Ph.D.  
President



# Admissions

In order to meet the growing demand for our unique program of Catholic liberal education, the College opened a second campus in New England in 2019. As was done on the California campus, the College is slowly increasing enrollment in New England and expects to reach full enrollment there in the next five to seven years.

Annual summer programs for high school students were held on both campuses. Both were well-attended, which will help ensure a steady flow of future applicants.



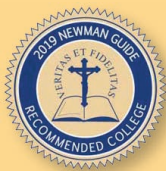
One of only 2 Catholic colleges in Top 50

Only Catholic institution in Top 20 "Best Value" liberal arts colleges

#2 in the country for alumni satisfaction, measured by rate of annual giving



Top 20 for:  
Best Classroom Experience  
Great Financial Aid  
Most Religious Students



"An impressive intellectual rigor that is matched by a commitment to orthodox Catholicism"



"Best Educational Value in America"



"Best 10 Colleges for the Money"

"Great student to faculty ratio"

"Excellent graduation and freshman retention rates"

"Diverse student body that comes from states all across the nation"

# 1284

average SAT score of incoming freshmen

national average: 1057

# 89%

student-retention rate

national average: 78%

# 81%

graduation rate

national average: 64%



# TAC in the News

**AUGUST 2020**

The Princeton Review gives TAC top ratings for academics, financial aid, and quality of life.



**OCTOBER 2020**

ACTA Gives TAC an "A" Rating, Perfect Score for Academics in 2020-21 Report.



**OCTOBER 2020**

\$15 Million Athletic Center Going Up at TAC

Ojai Valley News logo and article title: "\$15 million athletic center going up at Thomas Aquinas College". Includes a watercolor illustration of the building and a "NEWS" section header.

**FEBRUARY 2021**

TAC graduate Jake DeTar ('11) of DeTar Music Studios in Santa Barbara discusses faith and music and shares his story as a father and an LACatholic.



YouTube video player showing Jake DeTar playing guitar. Includes the hashtag #LACatholicStory and a "Watch on YouTube" button.

**FEBRUARY 2021**

The Pilot article titled "Catholic Colleges" with the sub-headline "Chapel takes shape as Thomas Aquinas College takes hold in New England". Includes a photo of the chapel and a "SPECIAL TO THE PILOT" section.

**MARCH 2021**

Greenfield Recorder article titled "Bishop Byrne visits, offers blessings at Thomas Aquinas College in Northfield". Includes a photo of Bishop Byrne at a podium and an "Email Newsletter" sign-up form.

# TAC in the News

APRIL 2021

*Liturgical Arts Journal* features transformation of New England campus' chapel sanctuary.



## Liturgical Arts Journal

Home » Architecture » Before and After: Thomas Aquinas College East Coast Chapel

### Before and After: Thomas Aquinas College East Coast Chapel

by John Paul Somen on April 13, 2021



30,000+ Antiques for Sale

J D T STUDIO

More good news from Thomas Aquinas College (TAC), keepers of a great intellectual heritage as one of the world's premier Catholic liberal arts colleges. Their recently acquired New England campus chapel has gone through a significant renovation that gives it a distinctly Catholic look, complete with an ornate richly carved 23-karat gold-leaf altar and reredos. Just this year, in 2021 the interior chapel sanctuary has been completely transformed from a lonely shell into a stunning masterpiece.



### The Dowry Workshop

Specialists in gothic revival art

NEW & RECENT TITLES FROM BIRETTA BOOKS

### THE LATIN MASS COMPANION

The Roman Rite or the Mass

This is a big change, considering the chapel had been built for non-denominational services, formerly belonging to the Northfield Mt. Hermon School, founded by a 19th-century evangelist named Dwight Moody. The new sanctuary shines, impressing upon all who visit a new visual focus, improving on the old academic Gothic shell while building upon a new hierarchy of visuals. The sanctuary wall is now awash in gold, symbolic of heaven, displaying a splash of sunlight and golden stars made with beautiful stencel technique.



APRIL 2021

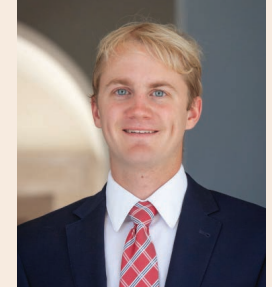
*"The Church Building as Sacred Place Embodied in Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel"*



## NATIONAL CATHOLIC REGISTER

APRIL 2021

*Class of 2021: Marked by Pandemic but Moving Forward with Faith in God*  
 Graduating Senior, Patrick Caughron ('21), one of three profiled



MAY 2021

President McLean discusses religious liberty and Title IX on EWTN News Show *InDepth*.



# The Year in Pictures

Though activities during FY 2021 were limited due to the pandemic, both the California and New England campuses stayed busy.

**JULY**  
2020



High School Summer Program

Matriculation is held outdoors



**AUG**  
2020



Tutors process to Mass of the Holy Spirit on Convocation Day

**OCT**  
2020



Seminar Weekend for Benefactors



High School Summer Program



Seminar Weekend for Benefactors

**DEC**  
2020



Tracy Center opens after renovation on NE campus

College launches new website — includes new features to highlight news from and information about both campuses



**MAR**  
2021

**FEB**  
2021



Pope St. John Paul II Athletic Center Takes Shape

**JAN**  
2021



Collection of icons from long-time benefactor and friend Tuffly Ellis+ on display in St. Thomas Hall Rotunda

Completion of Our Mother of Perpetual Help Chapel transition

**APR**  
2021



TAC's two campuses jointly close Global Rosary Relay for the Sanctification of Priests



**JUNE**  
2021

**MAY**  
2021



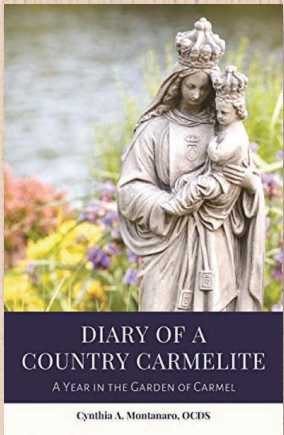
Commencements 2020 + 2021



Dr. Paul O'Reilly appointed next president of the College, to take office in May 2022

# Alumni Achievements

While the College's immediate goal is to provide its students with an excellent liberal education, its ultimate end is to participate in God's work to renew the face of the earth by sending into the world graduates whose minds and hearts have been formed according to the mind and heart of Christ. Thus prepared and serving in their varied professions and vocations, the College's alumni are a tremendous force for good in the Lord's work to transform the world and build up His church. Below are just a few examples of the good work our alumni, new and old, accomplished in Fiscal Year 2021.



**Cynthia (Six '77) Montanaro** is a Third Order Carmelite, wife, mother, and librarian. In 2020 she published *Diary of a Country Carmelite: A Year in the Garden of Carmel*, which offers a look into the lives of dozens of Carmelite saints, less known than the renowned St. Thérèse of Lisieux and St. John of the Cross, but nonetheless eminently holy. In this volume the author also recounts her experience of life and prayer in the country.

**Rev. Michael Masteller ('13)** offered a Mass of Thanksgiving at his alma mater following his ordination for the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. Rev. Masteller's first assignment is at St. Helen Parish in South Gate, a predominantly Hispanic area of Los Angeles. He is shown here giving a first blessing to President Michael McLean.



Architect **Erik Bootsma ('01)** visited New Mexico to check on progress at the site of a new shrine to St. Kateri Tekakwitha for which he provided the Spanish-Colonial design. Under construction just south of Gallup, it is being built with all-natural materials and in keeping with Native construction techniques.



Just five years after graduating from Thomas Aquinas College, and only two after being elected to the City Council of Dunsmuir, California, **Matthew Bryan ('15)** was elected the city's mayor.

After graduating from the College, former Olympic ice-dancer **Siobhan (Heekin-Canedy '18) O'Hara** obtained an MA in law and diplomacy from the Fletcher School at Tufts University. She was recently appointed North American Regional Director at World Youth Alliance, an organization that promotes the dignity of the human person and builds solidarity among youth worldwide.





The Diocese of Manchester, New Hampshire, presented its annual St. Joseph Award for teaching excellence to a graduate of the College who couples his extraordinary devotion to his students with service to his country: **Lt. Mark Forrester ('12)**. A math and theology teacher at Holy Family Academy, Lt. Forrester is also a member of the National Guard and was called up for active duty at a COVID-19 testing site just days after he had transitioned his school to online learning. Unfazed, he shouldered both responsibilities for the remainder of the academic year, often wearing fatigues as he conducted his remote classes from the testing site.



The Board of Directors of the Knights of Columbus — the world's largest Catholic fraternal organization, with more than 2 million members — elected **Patrick Mason ('03)** as its supreme secretary.



Commenting on his appointment, he said, "As part of my duties, I have to meet with bishops, correspond with members of the Church hierarchy, and inspire and help form our men in the Faith. Being able to pull from my knowledge of the true, the good, and the beautiful, and being able to communicate the ideas that I found and developed at Thomas Aquinas College, has really helped me in all those regards."



**Carl Schmitt ('90)** is a graduate of the University of Notre Dame Law School and a partner at Schmitt & Dillon Counselors at Law, which he co-founded with fellow TAC graduate Thomas M. Dillon ('91). Following the initial pandemic shutdowns, he worked closely with the Massachusetts Assistant Attorney General to re-open churches in the Commonwealth, allowing Bay State residents to safely assemble again in houses of worship. Commenting on his legal career, Schmitt says, "People often ask me whether the College prepared me for law school and the practice of law, and I tell them it was the best preparation I could have gotten because it taught me three seemingly simple but very important things: how to carefully read a text; how to seriously consider both sides of an argument; and how to really listen to others. I put what I learned at the College to work every day, and I am profoundly grateful for the education I received there."



**Kathleen (Doran) and Thomas Moore (both '19)** were the first alumni couple to wed in Our Mother of Perpetual Help Chapel on the New England campus. Thomas is now studying at the Augustine Institute in Denver to obtain an MA in theology, after which he hopes to teach theology to seminarians preparing for the priesthood.

# Student Life

The New England campus has replicated to a great degree the residential and spiritual life of the California campus, with variations based on the difference in climate and geography. Notably, students at the Northfield campus make great use of the gymnasium and indoor swimming pool during the winter months. As temperatures rise, they take to kayaking on the Connecticut River, while students on the California campus can be found hiking in the Los Padres National Forest or enjoying one of many nearby beaches.



# Benefactors

Fiscal Year 2021 ended with a phenomenal week of giving that raised over \$1 million. Earlier in the spring, Alumni and Parent Days of Giving were also record-setting.

The College is deeply grateful to all its benefactors for their faithful support for our unique program of genuine Catholic liberal education. Your generosity is providing our students with a firm intellectual, moral, and spiritual formation, and through the good work they go on to perform in the Church and in the world, you are truly helping to renew the face of the earth.

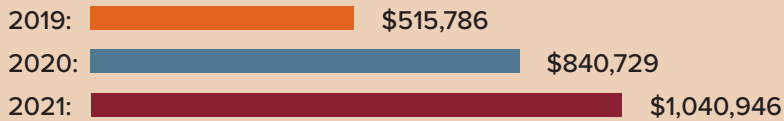
Benefactors are remembered at every Mass offered in Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel in California and in Our Mother of Perpetual Help Chapel in New England.

## All Funds Raised

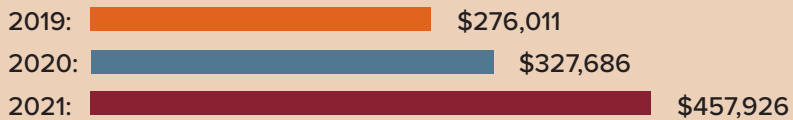


The Days of Giving play a large role in our annual fundraising efforts, and they have gained momentum over the years. Thank you for rallying with your fellow friends, parents, or alumni to support Thomas Aquinas College!

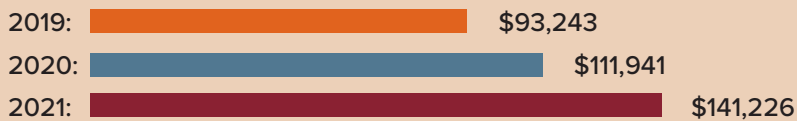
## Friends Week of Giving Appeal



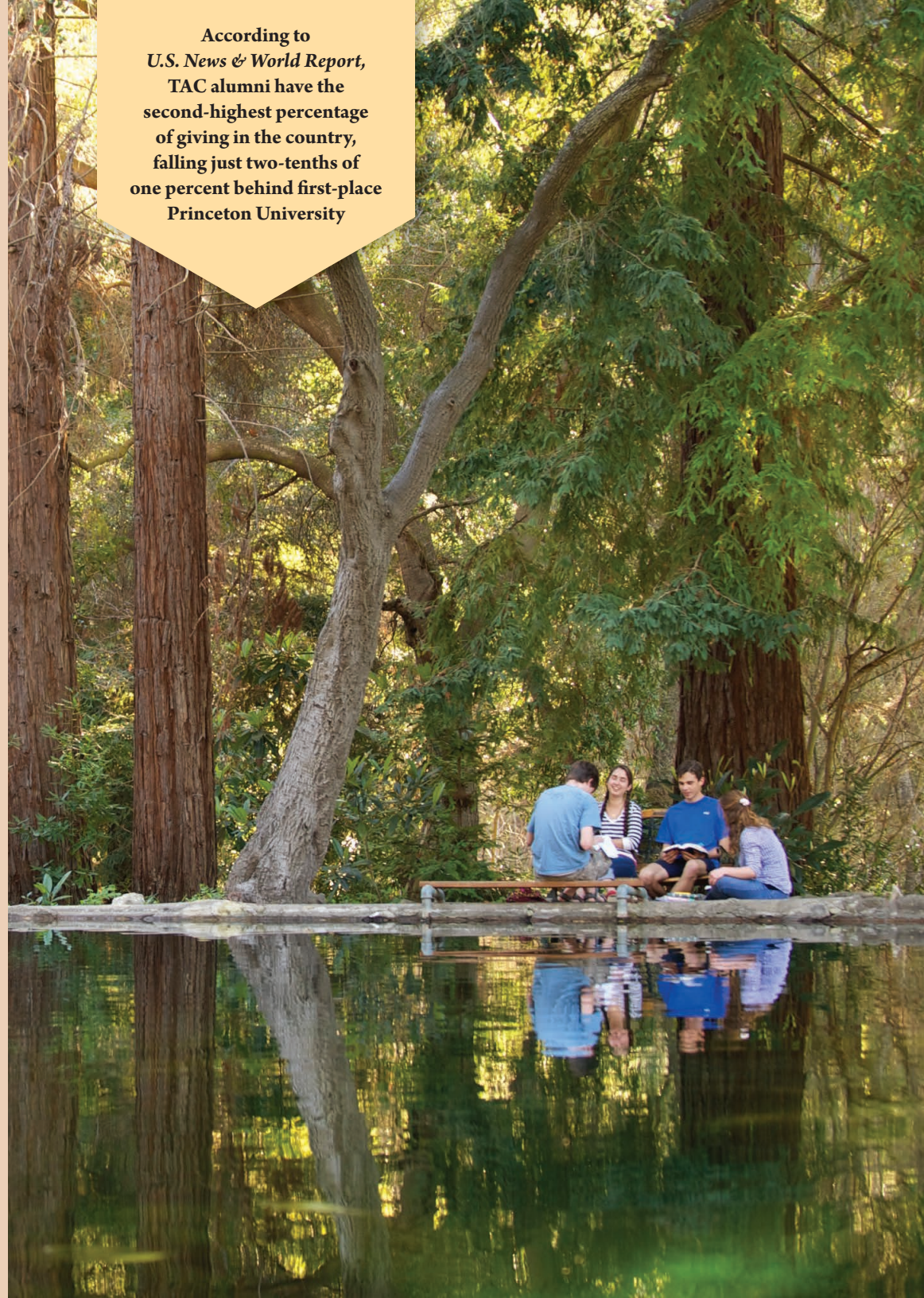
## Parent Day of Giving Appeal



## Alumni Day of Giving Appeal



According to  
*U.S. News & World Report*,  
TAC alumni have the  
second-highest percentage  
of giving in the country,  
falling just two-tenths of  
one percent behind first-place  
Princeton University





## Called to Do More?

The College's expansion to a second campus in New England brings with it increased operating costs. Our intention to grow enrollment increases our need to spread the word about our unique program. And with more graduates than ever, more mentors are needed to guide our young men and women to find their career paths.

### How you can help:

#### **Become a Spiritual Supporter**

Pray for the College and the well-being of its students, faculty, Board members, alumni, and benefactors.

#### **Become a Monthly Benefactor**

Contact Karim Obagi  
Director of Annual Giving  
(805) 421-5928 or [kobagi@thomasaquinas.edu](mailto:kobagi@thomasaquinas.edu)

#### **Become a Career Mentor**

Contact Dan Selmeczy ('08)  
College and Career Adviser  
(805) 525-4014 or [careers@thomasaquinas.edu](mailto:careers@thomasaquinas.edu)

#### **Become a member of the Alumni Association, the Parents' Association, or the Board of Regents**

Contact Robert Bagdazian  
Director of Alumni and Parent Relations  
(805) 421-5927 or [rbagdazian@thomasaquinas.edu](mailto:rbagdazian@thomasaquinas.edu)

Through membership in the College's Alumni Association, Parents' Association, or Boards of Regents, volunteers use their time and talents to help widen the scope of the College's outreach.

The Alumni and Parents' Associations foster Catholic liberal education by fundraising; assisting with student recruitment; and providing career and educational guidance, networking, and referrals for students and alumni.

Members of the Thomas Aquinas College Boards of Regents are dynamic local leaders who serve as ambassadors of the College, helping to introduce and promote the College to new friends throughout their regions. They also help organize regional fundraising events to benefit the Annual Fund.