

# THOMAS AQUINAS COLLEGE NEWSLETTER

## COMMENCEMENT 2020

VOLUME 49, ISSUE 2

### Together Again!

#### College Welcomes Back Class of 2020 for a Belated Graduation

When Covid-19 forced members of the Thomas Aquinas College Class of 2020 to make an early return home during their Senior Year — just weeks shy of their canceled Commencement exercises — they were given a choice: How, and when, would they like to celebrate their graduation?

There was little dispute. Having finished their studies remotely, the seniors were adamant that they did not want a Commencement mediated through screens. They would wait as long as necessary to celebrate in person. Unable to end their Senior Year together, they would not graduate apart.

And so, some 14 months after their premature departure from the California campus, members of the Class of 2020 returned on May 29, 2021, for a graduation that was only made sweeter for its delay. The Most Rev. Michael C. Barber, S.J., Bishop of Oakland, presided over a Commencement Day marked by the joy of once more being together and gratitude to God for His mercies.

The day began with the Baccalaureate Mass of the Holy Spirit, offered outdoors on the academic quadrangle, with Bishop Barber serving as the principal celebrant and homilist, joined at the altar by the campus' three chaplains. Members of the faculty, Board of Governors, and the Class of 2020 processed from St. Joseph Commons, down the steps beside the Guadalupe Fountain, dressed in academic regalia. Several of the newlywed graduates marched alongside their classmates-turned-spouses, newborns in arms.

Mindful of the hardships that the Class of 2020 had already endured, His Excellency delivered a homily with the challenging yet hopeful prediction that, even though they could expect yet more hardship, God would always provide consolation. "You will suffer," he warned, "but



you will suffer with the help and infusion and the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit, and this will give you a sense of peace beyond all understanding."

At the ensuing Commencement ceremony, Senior Class Speaker Graham Crawley ('20) reflected on one way that graduates have already experienced such consolations. "How unique is it that our graduation is not so much a farewell as it is a reunion?" he asked. "Graduation is a celebration not of what we have accomplished but of who we have become ... a real community, one ordered to a shared end, enriched by each of our participation in it."

In his Commencement Address, Bishop Barber urged the members of this community to put these blessings to the service of God and neighbor. "If you want to change the world, if you want to change the Catholic Church for the better, teach First Holy Communion class in your parish. Teach Confirmation class in your parish," he advised. "Use this outstanding education you have received here at TAC to pass on the Catholic faith to the next generation in its fullness."

His Excellency next blessed the diplomas and Dr.

Jared P. Kuebler, assistant dean for student affairs on the California campus, called the graduates, one at a time, up to the dais. Upon being fitted with academic hoods, they received their diplomas and, before returning to their seats, triumphantly flipped the tassels on their mortarboards from the right side to the left.

Per College tradition, Dr. McLean then concluded the program by delivering the College's Charge to the Graduates. "You are charged this day," he began, "with maintaining, defending, and protecting your Catholic heritage, its faith, its hope, its charity, and all its learning and culture." In humility and gratitude, the members of the Class of 2020 responded

by singing *Non nobis, Domine, non nobis, sed nomini Tuo da gloriam* — "Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to Your name give glory."

To conclude the ceremony, chaplain Rev. Cornelius M. Buckley, S.J., delivered a benediction that was both reverent and hilarious, likening the Class of 2020 to California wines.

"After ripening, bunches of grapes are harvested, crushed, and the juices poured into vats to spend time fermenting," the beloved chaplain began. "Then they are bottled and put out to bring joy to many." The graduates, he continued, "after four long years of tutor training," were likewise "happily harvested — then crushed, and for more than a year they have been fast fermenting, dreaming of the day when they would be poured into graduation gowns and corked with funny caps. That day has come; thank you, Lord."

#### Commencement 2020

Audio, photo slideshows & more:  
[thomasaquinas.edu/commencement2020](http://thomasaquinas.edu/commencement2020)

### In Memoriam

#### Cecilia Christina Marie Davidson ('20)

Only months after members of the Class of 2020 returned to the California campus for their long-overdue Commencement in May, they received the tragic news that one of their classmates had gone to her eternal reward. Cecilia Davidson ('20) died September 17, 2021, in a swimming accident at Cleveland's Edgewater Beach on Lake Erie.

Cecilia was her family's lone daughter, the beloved sister of four brothers, including Brendan ('17). Her parents, Margot (Foucht '92) and Dan Davidson ('91), are both Thomas Aquinas College alumni, and — even though she considered pursuing a nursing degree directly out of high school — their example convinced her to come to TAC first.

"I was obviously strongly influenced by their love of this school growing up," Cecilia recounted during her Freshman Year. "The older I got, the more clearly I could see the ways in which my parents



were different from other people I knew, and I grew to understand the way their education here had helped to shape them intellectually and spiritually. I wanted that kind of formation for myself."

Cecilia enrolled as a freshman in 2016 and was instantly admired for her thoughtfulness, creativity, and quick wit. "She had an unforgettably kind and beautiful presence," recalls tutor Dr. Karen Zedlick,

who taught Cecilia's Junior Music class. "She was a golden girl, a fine student, and a loving Christian," adds tutor Dr. Richard Ferrier. "She will be missed."

While at the College Cecilia played intramural sports and participated in various theatrical productions. She enjoyed hiking, kayaking, and volunteering at soup kitchens and nursing homes. In keeping with her dream of becoming a nurse, she worked as a Certified Nursing Assistant at a long-term care facility during her summers.

"I remember baking/cooking with Cecilia for almost every dance or event our class put on," says classmate Emilie Crimmins. "She told me she felt I saw her in her 'true colors' as we worked late and became tired, but even in her 'true colors' she was a beautiful person."

When she was a junior, Cecilia reflected on the ways she had changed during her first two years at the College.

"Emotionally and spiritually I have certainly grown and matured, particularly by participating in the school's deep spiritual life," she observed. "It has instilled in me a deep wonder for the order and beauty, the almost unbelievable unity it has revealed in the things I've studied."

For all the changes, however, she remained steadfast in her desire to become a nurse. "I hope to go into a missionary field of nursing, or into women's health," she remarked at the start of her Senior Year. Last fall she began an accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing program at Baldwin-Wallace University in Ohio.

"I valued Cecilia's natural, confident openness," says tutor Dr. Andrew Seeley. "She was quick to laugh, sympathetic to others, ready to engage in the kind of serious conversation that tutors love. Her decision to be a nurse came from what I think was deepest in her heart — love of people, especially of serving them in their needs."

# “We Thank You for What You Have Given to TAC”

## Dr. McLean’s Remarks to the Class of 2020 at the President’s Dinner

Congratulations and welcome back to the Class of 2020. The last time we spoke I was announcing the end of in-person instruction, the pivot to online learning, and the cancelation of your graduation ceremony and all the attendant celebrations.

It’s wonderful that so many of you have returned to reunite with your classmates and tutors to joyfully mark the Commencement you so richly deserve. We have very much looked forward to this reunion and we are grateful for the opportunity we have had to partner with you — albeit with a significant interruption — in your education.

It’s an understatement to say that your class certainly had its share of challenges.

First, a sudden and lengthy evacuation in the face of the Thomas Fire on December 4, 2017 — an evacuation which extended to the beginning of the spring semester in January 2018. Some of our students left without purses or wallets and had to charm their way through TSA at local airports; others, for all I know, left without sufficient socks and underwear. All this in their haste to obey fire officials’ and the College administration’s command to leave.

After the fire we were worried about possible floods and earthquakes, but managed to avoid those at least on our campus here.

As you well know, we didn’t skip a pandemic, which caused yet another evacuation. Thanks in large part to your and to the faculty’s patience, cooperation, and flexibility, Zoom instruction went pretty well. But it was no substitute for the community life that is so essential to our ability to foster the moral, intellectual, and theological virtues and to our ability to conduct successfully our program of



Catholic liberal education.

Together with the faculty and staff, our remaining students, as you know, managed to return this year to in-person instruction and community life — with all its plans, protocols, and procedures — pretty darn well.

They succeeded in completing the academic year here and enjoyed the extracurricular activities that make for a rewarding and fulfilling respite from the rigors of academic work. They were also nourished with the graces provided by our chaplains — perhaps even more graces than are customary if hand sanitizer is in any way capable of providing supernatural benefits.

I think we should be grateful to God, to our benefactors, and to Dean Goyette for our having completed the year as well as we have.

Your class, although you never returned to in-person instruction, has much to celebrate this evening. The fact that so many of you have returned for your Commencement ceremony is a cause for celebration in its own right.

You were diligent students and faithful members of the community. While here, you worked hard at your studies, fostered healthy friendships, contributed to the common good, and tended to your spiritual well-being. We thank and commend you for these things and we thank you for what you have given to Thomas Aquinas College — to the success of our classes, to our musical, dramatic, and athletic culture, and to our worship.

You were tutored by a wonderful faculty and taught by the likes of

“As a result of true friendships with your tutors and fellow students and the ministry of our chaplains, you grew in virtue and, I hope, ended a few steps closer to the Beatific Vision.”

Homer, Euclid, Plato, Aristotle, St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, Shakespeare, Newton, Newman, and Einstein.

You read some of the greatest books our civilization has produced and pondered some of the deepest questions humanity faces. You began in wonder and, I hope, ended with the beginnings of wisdom. As a result of true friendships with your tutors and fellow students and the ministry of our chaplains, you grew in virtue and, I hope, ended a few steps closer to the Beatific Vision.

You should be proud of what you achieved and grateful for what you received. Please pray for those benefactors who make the College possible, pray for the faculty who made your education possible, and pray for your class, that all its members may continue to grow in age and wisdom and grace.

Thank you.



## One Year Later

### “I Took a Gamble, and I Won Big”

Kayla (Grimm '20) Murphy

Part of the Thomas Aquinas College application is an essay on why you want to go to TAC. The irony of this essay is that you can’t possibly know why you want to go until you’ve gone — or rather, you can’t really know why the education is worthwhile until you have in some part received it.

I went to TAC on a gamble. I didn’t know what exactly the school had to offer. I might have copied phrases like “education for its own sake” from the College website, but what high school student can grasp that concept?

“The Class of 2020 caught up on the last year of our lives spent apart and then left rejuvenated — ready to return to our homes across the U.S. and the world, and to continue to fight the good fight wherever we go, with the love of the Faith and of the Truth and of each other burning brightly within us.”

What I knew was that I wanted to be like the graduates of Thomas Aquinas College. The ones I knew, my parents especially, were happy and good people. Not to mention, they were fun-loving, joy-filled, intelligent, well-read, still great friends with their classmates from 20 years ago, and with only good things to say about

their alma mater.

I didn’t know what about TAC made these graduates this way, but I thought maybe if I went I could get a piece of this happiness for myself. I knew I may be sacrificing the career paths at Notre Dame or UCLA that many of my high school classmates were choosing, but it seemed worth the risk.

So I took a gamble, and I won big. The education I received at TAC was not only worthwhile, but priceless.

I won’t attempt to describe that education or its countless benefits — I have neither the skill nor the page space.

But I can tell you that there is no experience in the world like the joy of understanding, entirely for its own sake, a piece of Newton’s *Principia* or St. Thomas’ *Summa Theologiae*.

And I can tell you I was happy while I was at TAC, I am proud to have graduated, and I feel confident that with the tools I received there I can tackle any schooling, career, or vocation that God has planned for me.

My classmates and I — the Class of 2020 — are particularly grateful for our time at Thomas Aquinas College. We had the unique experience of being sent home for the last month of our time at TAC. We saw the value of our community never more clearly than when chance deprived us of it prematurely. We saw the value of the education with new light when we realized the tutors and the whole staff were willing to jump through hoops in order to help us achieve it, and to help us celebrate that achievement, even a whole year later.

During that year I joined the workforce, married my

husband and classmate Michael, and had a baby boy, baptized Damien Peter on May 8, 2021. My husband and I excitedly looked forward to our graduation in May. We were eager to laugh and to commemorate and to philosophize with our tutors and classmates, to introduce our son to them, and to celebrate with them our achievement of four years.

The Class of 2020 caught up on the last year of our lives spent apart and then left rejuvenated — ready to return to our homes across the U.S. and the world, and to continue to fight the good fight wherever we go, with the love of the Faith and of the Truth and of each other burning brightly within us.

I will carry the memory of TAC through life, and in turn, the memory of my time there, along with the education I received and the friends I made, will carry me through life — and God willing, happily into the next.

Mrs. Murphy is from Pasadena, California.



# “Hold Fast to Faith”

## Bishop Barber’s Homily from the Baccalaureate Mass

*The Most Rev. Michael C. Barber, S.J., Bishop of Oakland, served as Thomas Aquinas College’s 2020 Commencement Speaker on May 29, 2021.*

“Remember the word I spoke to you: No slave is greater than his master. If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will also keep yours. And they will do all these things to you on account of My name, because they do not know the one who sent Me” (Jn. 15:20-1).

Every seven years, the bishop of a diocese is required to go to Rome for his *ad limina* visit, to visit the Pope and the cardinals who are different heads of the Vatican departments or dicasteries. During the last years of the reign of Pope John Paul II, when Cardinal Ratzinger was still the head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, a group of bishops from the West Coast went over to Rome. I was not among them, but one of the bishops told me this story:

They went in to have their audience with Cardinal Ratzinger, and they went into the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith. They were shown into this very large room, and up in front of the room was a giant bench that looked just like the bench of the Supreme Court, and Cardinal Ratzinger was seated there, with his assistant officials and archbishops of the Congregation. (When I went for my *ad limina* last year, I was in that room, and I immediately knew where we were; I said, “How many Jesuits have had their heresy trials in this room?”) Continuing the story: Cardinal Ratzinger, as head of the Congregation, made a few introductory remarks, and then he said, “Are there any questions from you visiting bishops?”

One bishop raised his hand — he was a new bishop — and he says, “Your Eminence, what do we do? We are attacked for being pro-marriage; we are attacked for being pro-life; we are attacked by pro-choice people; we are attacked by people in pro-euthanasia, gay marriage, transgender movements; and they are all violently against us. What do we do, Your Eminence?”

And Cardinal Ratzinger pressed his microphone on and said, “Yes, you will suffer.” Click. That’s it.

“Yes, you will suffer.”

### **Peace Beyond All Understanding**

Like the loyal Catholics living in Mexico in the 1920s, or during the time of Nazi Germany, or if you are a Catholic living in China and faithful to the Pope, or in Vietnam, or Japan, or Africa, during the times of persecutions by emperors and kings, or if you were a Catholic in England in the time of Henry VIII or Queen Elizabeth, or if you were a Catholic at the time of Jesus and his Apostles, *you will suffer*. But you will suffer with the help and infusion and the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit, and this will give you a sense of peace beyond all understanding. When you are under attack, remember the words of Jesus, Who prepared His apostles for their oncoming persecution: “Take courage. I have overcome the world.” We have to remember that.

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For example, Fr. Christopher Magallanes in 1920s Mexico, not even 100 years ago: At that time the government of Mexico was hostile to the Church and made it a crime to say Mass, attend Mass, or receive baptism. The Mexican government closed all seminaries, and yet Fr. Christopher Magallanes opened a clandestine seminary in his parish. Like Fr. Miguel Pro, Fr. Christopher went around celebrating underground Masses. Eventually arrested and falsely accused of inciting rebellion, he



gave away his possessions to his executioners, then gave them absolution. Then, his last words before he was shot: “I am innocent, and I die innocent. I forgive with all my heart those responsible for my death, and I ask God that the shedding of my blood serve the peace of our divided Mexico.” That priest died radiating peace, peace he received through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

In Vietnam, in the times of the persecutions there, Fr. Andrew Dũng-Lạc, one of the first native Vietnamese priests: He was arrested multiple times and held for ransom. The faithful raised the ransom money; he got released; he would go to another village, another town, get arrested again, get ransomed again; and finally they just couldn’t raise any more money to ransom him, and he was executed by beheading. Yet his example has inspired generations of Vietnamese Catholics.

I went to Vietnam a couple of years ago at the invitation of one of the bishops. He asked me to give a talk to all the priests in his diocese whom he had brought together, and he translated for me. He said, “Bishop Barber, notice, when you look at this group of priests: There are a lot of young ones, no middle-aged priests, and then about a dozen elderly.” He went on, “We have no middle-aged because the Church was shut down by the Communists in that period, and every elderly priest you see here spent at least 10 years in prison.” Those elderly priests radiated peace.

If you stand for the Faith, yes, you will suffer. But remember what Cardinal Newman said: “Those who take part with Peter are on the winning side.” Hear Christ say to you, “You will be my witnesses to the ends of the Earth.” Well, how do we handle that? What do we do? How am I going to do that?

### **Hold Fast to Faith**

Follow what St. Paul says in the letter to the Colossians: “You must hold fast to faith. Be firmly grounded and steadfast in it; unshaken in the hope promised you by the Gospel you have received.”

I just want to say that again: “You must hold fast to faith. Be firmly grounded and steadfast in it, unshaken in the hope promised to you by the Gospel you have received.” And if you do that, then the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

And one last thing: It’s not all bad news. It’s not all persecution. If it were all suffering, no one would join our religion, right? But the Lord sends us the encouragement and the consolation we need. He shows us His love; His sacred heart is always there. One of the greatest encouragements I have received personally in the last few years is this: I have seen people who are willing to give up everything to become Catholic and enter the Church.

One example: my close friend of over 25 years; his name is Travis Moger. He and I were fellow Navy chaplains and officers. We both rose up the ranks together over a 20-year period. We both became captains in the

Navy. Travis was a Southern Baptist minister, and of the 900 chaplains in the Navy, 300 are Southern Baptist. He was in line to become the next Admiral Chief of Chaplains for the Navy Reserve. He had a doctorate in history and was a professor at the U.S. Naval Academy. Had everything going for him.

“If you stand for the Faith, yes, you will suffer. But remember what Cardinal Newman said: ‘Those who take part with Peter are on the winning side.’”

Three years ago, he called me up, and said, “Mike, I have a surprise for you. My wife, my children, and I are going to be received into the Catholic Church at the Easter Vigil.” I almost dropped the phone. I was stunned. He had to give up becoming an admiral; not only that, the Southern Baptists would rescind their endorsement of him as a chaplain, and he would have to resign his commission as a naval officer. He couldn’t become a Catholic chaplain, because you have to be a priest, and you can’t go from being a Baptist minister directly to being a Catholic priest; you’ve got to be a normal Catholic first, then go to seminary. So he had to abandon his Naval career, all for our faith.

And yet he was at total peace. I said to him, “How are you going to live? What are you going to do? How are you going to feed your family? You have three children!” He said, “I don’t know, but I know God will take care of me.” He had that peace beyond all understanding.

He wrote a fantastic one-page testimony, like Newman’s *Apologia*, only in one page — *Why I Decided to Become a Catholic* — and he gave it to all 300 Southern Baptist chaplains in the Navy. Just to quote a bit of what he said: “At the age of 50, I am leaving the ministry I love to follow Christ, Whom I love more.” He said, “An intensive study of the Bible and Christian history convinced me that the Catholic Church is the one, holy, catholic, and Apostolic church; the Ark of Salvation founded on the rock of St. Peter; and entrusted with the Faith, handed down by Christ and His Apostles. I find her authority, doctrine, sacred liturgy, moral teachings, and prayer life in line with the teachings of the Bible and the historic Christian faith.”

He ended his testimony by saying this: “When I was serving on active duty in the Navy Chief of Chaplains office in the Pentagon and then at the U.S. Naval Academy, I spent many evenings researching and writing in the library of Virginia Theological Seminary in Alexandria. Every time I entered the building, I would read the inscription next to the door, which has become the motto of my spiritual journey:

“Seek the truth. Come whence it may, cost what it will.”

# “We Loved Something Good”

## The 2020 Senior Address by Graham Crawley ('20)

Bishop Barber; President McLean; Dr. Goyette; Mr. Kuebler; governors, priests, and religious; faculty, family, and friends: It is my great honor to deliver this address on behalf of my beloved friends and classmates, the Class of 2020.

*“Vanity of vanities. All is vanity ... I applied my mind to know wisdom and to know madness and folly. I perceived that this also is but a striving after wind. For in much wisdom is much vexation” (Ecc. 1:1,13-14).*



The Class of 2020 elected Graham Crawley as its Class Speaker ...

We began our time here with these encouraging words, and in the coming months we found that Solomon was not kidding. Surely all of us have known vexation in this pursuit of the beginnings of wisdom, and surely all of us, in varying degree, have known madness, and a few of us, I am sure, stirred up some conversation with folly. But hopefully now we can all respond to the above passage, from our first theology reading, with the characteristically playful and penetrating words of Socrates from our final seminar reading: “That would have been fine to say if madness were bad, pure and simple; but in fact the best things we have come from madness, when it is given as a gift of the god.”

The decision to come to this school seems mad to many people unfamiliar with it, but I think we would not have so many return from around the country for this formality if we did not hold it somewhere deep in our souls as a precious gift from God. This community is a part of us, and though we have moved beyond its physical location, we are still very much a part of it, that is, if we keep it close in our minds and hearts.

How unique is it that our graduation is not so much a farewell as it is a reunion? Graduation is a celebration not of what we have accomplished but of who we have become. As a real community, one ordered to a shared end, enriched by each of our participation in it, this accomplishment cannot be properly celebrated without tipping our hats to all who are a part of it. Every single one of us made this class what it is — all those here, and all those who could not make it today. And we aren't alone. We would not be without the class before us, and the class before that, our tutors, our chaplains, all who contributed to our rich culture.

### Strain Every Nerve

Now we have left the order, isolation, intimacy, and aesthetic beauty of this little community. We have spent a year in the world. Already, our time at TAC feels a distant memory. Imagine 10, 30. We, along with the rest of the material world, are subject to time. In 10 years the experience we had here will seem a dream. This is the unfortunate reality of our material world, always tending toward dissolution and uniformity.

At the beginning of the *Divine Comedy*, Dante finds himself “midway along the journey of life,” “full of sleep” in the midst of a gnarled and savage wilderness. If it can happen to Dante, friends, it can happen to us. What,

then, in light of our education here, have we become? If it is worth celebrating, it is worth preserving and nurturing.

We are rational animals. We have immaterial souls. This is the key to all lasting things. This is the key given to all those who pursue wisdom. We learned in Senior Natural Science that a distinctive trait of a living thing is that it actively resists disorder and decay. This applies to the life of the body as much as it does the life of the soul. In the same way that material tends toward dissolution and disorder, the fallen soul tends toward what is lukewarm and mundane. This is Adam's curse.

With every breath, with every thought, with every prayer we must resist this. “We must labor to be beautiful.” We must, as Aristotle says, “strain every nerve to live by that which is best in us.” In this striving, our time here will not fade, it will not dissolve, it will not have been in vain. In this pursuit and love of truth, we become something more than mortal. Our education was not about teaching us what to think, but how to live.

### The Battlefield for Truth

So, how ought we to live? What does the life of the fledgling philosopher look like? No matter where we find ourselves, we have all been thrust out of our warm little nest into the battlefield for Truth. We have left our community for a world obsessed with appearances, rather than understanding; a world dominated by mediated, virtual experience, rather than intimate, human experience. What it means to be a human being is in danger of being lost on us. It would be shameful and sad if we, who made movements toward the mouth of the cave, were to scurry back down into its depths.

We are not to lose our humanity to despondence or fear. We are not to spend our lives prodding and snapping at one another in some social-media thread. We are not to forget what it is to wake up on a crisp morning and see that white cross upon that green hill, and see those familiar figures walking across the quad to Mass. We are to greet every day with a “*Sursum corda!*” and encounter every single individual we meet in this world with the same love that brought the universe into existence. And if we do not, we allow ourselves to be disturbed and prevented from loving the Truth and one another. We mustn't let the world disturb our souls. And we mustn't tread lightly when it comes to truth.

If we are to make any descent back into the cave, it should only be to rouse the others.

At the risk of ruffling a few feathers, I would like to draw from the wisdom (or madness, depending on how you take it) of a most saintly and controversial character.

If the character provokes some disagreement, I hope at least that my point will be salvaged. I quote, “There is no knight errant who is not in love,” said Don Quixote. Whether or not you think Don Quixote was simply misguided or utterly and harmfully insane, I think he offers us invaluable insight into the spirit with which we ought to approach our lives as true lovers of wisdom. We must be noble-minded, courageous, and to be these things, we must be madly in love. The noble-minded man lifts the minds of others from the profane to the sacred. The courageous man loves so much he is willing to die for what he loves, though he is a mad man, as far as the coward is concerned. You see, to be noble-minded and courageous is to be one who is madly in love.



... Joseph Wiebersch ('20) to sing the National Anthem ...

We chose to come to a school ordered to a communion with the great minds. In the same way that Don Quixote became the books he read, we, in some small way, became the books we read. If we are not careful, this inheritance living within us will die, despondent. If this gift of God is a kind of madness, then let us continue to ramble in it.

Let us see beyond mundane appearances, to the sacred and what is most real. Let us seek to know, in order that we may love all the more. We made this place our home for a little while, but we are already sojourners in

“Every single one of us made this class what it is — all those here, and all those who could not make it today. And we aren't alone. We would not be without the class before us, and the class before that, our tutors, our chaplains, all who contributed to our rich culture.”

this world. Then let us be knights errant, in a mad world that calls us mad.

### Lovers of Wisdom

I admit, sometimes it seems as though hell is rising up around us. Ought this change a single thing about the focus of our lives? “A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand: but it shall not come nigh thee.” It would be a slavish and un-Christian thing if we were to let all that's going on in the world impede upon this living gift.

As warriors of truth, we must love truth more than it is hated by those who persecute it, “pursuing her like a hunter, and lying in wait on her paths.” This is what it means to keep our education close to us. Choose what interests you. Reread those favorites from our time at TAC. Direct daily effort to the life of the mind. The joy we all experienced at various times in our education, this is the stuff of happiness. We lived this for four years! Are we to leave it to a fading memory?

A philosopher, by definition, is a lover of wisdom. With any luck, this is what we have become in our time at TAC. What are we if not philosophers? As children of God we were made to love truth, beauty, and goodness, and if in this life we do not pursue this to its end, then we have fallen short even of the title “man” or “woman.” Our diploma is but a participation trophy if we have not fallen in love with the Truth.

To truly graduate this place is to be welcomed into the community of those who love.

Our school proposes to give us the “beginnings of Wisdom.” The book of Proverbs tells us that “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” Not fear as in terror or even merely fear of punishment, but rather, that same fear that a good child has for his father: it is awe, exuberant admiration, and ardent love. If our time here at Thomas Aquinas College has provided us with anything, I sincerely hope that it has enkindled in us the fire of His love. May we spend our lives stoking and fanning that flame. Thank you.



... and Joseph Blewett ('20) to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Crawley is from Scottsdale, Arizona. For audio of his address, see [thomasaquinas.edu/commencement2020](http://thomasaquinas.edu/commencement2020).

# The Class of 2020

## and Senior Thesis Titles



Make-Up: To Wear  
or Not to Wear?  
**SARAH MARIE ABOOD**  
South Euclid, Ohio



“He Must Increase, but I  
Must Decrease”: An Analysis  
of Humility and Its Role in  
Securing Authentic Self-love  
**MICHAELA RAE  
ANDRUES**  
Novato, California



“To Hold the Mirror up to  
Nature”: A Case for  
*Hamlet’s* Success  
**CORNELIA KATHRYN  
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“All the Ways of the Lord Are  
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Brings Good from Sin  
**ANGELICA CELESTE  
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Merced, California



Can Man Make Life?  
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A Historical and Philosophical  
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Saint Clair Shores, Michigan



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Aristotle and Locke on the  
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**CLAIRE MARIE BIRCH**  
Nokesville, Virginia



“Whence Even the Lover of Myth  
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Wonders”: An Examination  
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**HELEN THERESE BLAIN**  
Albuquerque, New Mexico



The Infinite Glory of Mary  
**JOSEPH ALEXANDER  
BLEWETT**  
Santa Paula, California



A “Laborious, Pure, and Socially  
Delightful Life”: The Role of the  
Peasants in *Anna Karenina*  
**CALISTA AMY MARIE  
BOWMAN**  
Camarillo, California



“*Interiacet Menti et Voci*”:  
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as a Part of Speech  
**CECILIA ANN  
CAMMAROTA**  
Fair Oaks, California



The Unraveling of Human  
Nature: An Inquiry Concerning  
the Moral Philosophies of Hume  
and Aristotle  
**GRAHAM GEORGE  
CRAWLEY**  
Scottsdale, Arizona



Why Can’t I Be A Barbie?  
Whether the Western Ideal  
of Woman’s Beauty Is Proper  
to Her Natural State  
**EMILIE LUCRECIA LUCY  
CRIMMINS**  
Post Falls, Idaho



Charged with the Grandeur  
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Poetic Knowledge  
**CECILIA CHRISTINA  
MARIE DAVIDSON**  
Lake Ariel, Pennsylvania



Whether a Political Community  
Has an Obligation  
to Accept Refugees  
**ANGELA MARIE  
DOBRAWA**  
Santa Rosa, California



“Go Now, Play, Live for Me”:  
An Enquiry of the Necessity  
of Playfulness for Christian  
Perfection  
**THERESA KIM DONAHOE**  
Chatham, New Jersey



“Sanctify Them in the Truth;  
Your Word Is Truth”:  
The Analogy of the Human Word  
to the Divine Word  
**MELANIE ROSE GEIER**  
Eastvale, California



On the Demonstrability of the  
Existence of Atoms  
**SAMUEL JOSEPH  
GERRARD**  
Laguna Hills, California



Countering Cantor:  
The Contradictions in  
Counting the Infinite  
**CLARE MARIE TERESA  
GISLA**  
Sacramento, California



*Sub tuum praesidium  
confugimus, sancta Dei genitrix:*  
A Consideration of the Blessed  
Virgin’s Titles “Mother of All  
Men” and “Mediatrice of Grace”  
and Their Essential Relationship  
**HANNAH JEANNINE  
GOMEZ**  
La Mirada, California



The Prudential Art  
**KAYLA MARIE GRIMM**  
 Alhambra, California



On the Power of a Woman's  
 Beauty: A Comparison Between  
 Judith and the Wife of Bath  
**CAROLINE HELENE  
 GUINEE**  
 North Andover, Massachusetts



Descartes, the Unit, and the  
 "One": An Investigation into  
 Descartes' Understanding of the  
 Unit according to the Division of  
 "One" in the *Metaphysics*  
**PETER AGUSTIN  
 HERNANDEZ**  
 Sacramento, California



The Proper Ordering  
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 Natural Sciences  
**LIAM PATRICK HOGAN**  
 Edmonds, Washington



Suffering Is Necessary  
 for Happiness  
**JASON JOHN HUANG**  
 Santa Paula, California



On the Necessity of the Internal  
 Search for the Eternal Being  
**VERONICA LYNNE JOST**  
 Algonquin, Illinois



"This Dead Butcher and  
 His Fiendlike Queen":  
 On the Unity of Lord and Lady  
 Macbeth in the Assassination  
 of King Duncan  
**KEZIA RUTH KIRCHNER**  
 Littleton, Colorado



On the Abuse of Language  
**ANNA-MARIE THÉRÈSE  
 LANGLEY**  
 Houston, Texas



"The Family Is the Factory That  
 Manufactures Mankind":  
 An Investigation into Why  
 It Is Proper for Children to  
 Be Raised by Their Parents  
**CLARE MARIE MARTHA  
 LANGLEY**  
 Camarillo, California



*Cantate Domino!*  
 The Power and Purpose of  
 Music in Catholic Liturgy  
**THOMAS MICHAEL  
 BENEDICT MAZZA**  
 Brookfield, Wisconsin



Man as a Self-Shaper: The Power  
 and Freedom of Assent to Law  
**MICHAELA LYNNE  
 ADELAIDE MCCALL**  
 Centerville, Ohio



On the Free Foundation  
 of America  
**MARY BRIDGET KATERI  
 MCCANN**  
 Chesterfield, Missouri

**Note:** As not all members of the Class of 2020 were able to return for Commencement, the College, regretfully, could not capture portraits of the graduates listed below.

Magnitude Matters: An Exploration of the Evolution  
 of the Terms "Magnitude" and "Unit" and Its Effects  
**MARCOS AURELIUS AGUIRRE**  
 Rancho Cucamonga, California

"For This I Was Born, and for This I Have Come  
 into the World, to Bear Witness to the Truth":  
 An Examination of the Men in *Kristin Lavransdatter*  
 and Whether They Fulfill Their Unique Mission  
 of Manliness  
**ZACHARIAH DAVID BRITAIN**  
 Phoenix, Arizona

Before and After: Aristotle on  
 Time's Unique Direction  
**CHRISTIAN MICHAEL THAYNE  
 EMRICH**  
 Leominster, Massachusetts

"The Right of the People to Keep and Bear Arms  
 Shall Not Be Infringed":  
 A Defense of the Second Amendment  
**IGNACIO TOMÁS ALTAMIRANDA**  
 Ridgefield, Connecticut

"I Applied My Mind to Know Wisdom and to  
 Know Madness and Folly, I Perceived That  
 This Also Is but Striving after Wind"  
**MATEO CHRISTOPHER CAMMAROTA**  
 Folsom, California

Sympathy for the Devil: When and How Is Despair  
 an Appropriate Object for Contemplation in Art?  
**ROLAND HUGH FERRIER**  
 Santa Paula, California

Intellectual Growth: Plato and Thomas on  
 What the Teacher Gives  
**THOMAS FRANCIS ARNOLD**  
 Muncie, Indiana

Heart of Stone to Heart of Flesh  
**GRACE ANN CASSADY**  
 Mariposa, California

*Mater Dolorosa*: An Exposition on the Suffering  
 of the Mother of God  
**MICHAELA MARIE FLANDERS**  
 Muscatine, Iowa

*Rex Regum et Dominus Dominantium*:  
 On the Relationship of Church and State  
**SOFÍA BARRANTES HERNANDEZ**  
 San José, Costa Rica

In Search of the Origin of True Culture:  
 A Study of Culture from Mind versus Heart through  
 the Works of Flannery O'Connor  
**MARY MARGARET DOWNES**  
 Hickory Corners, Michigan

Is the Part Greater than the Whole?  
 An Exploration of the Relationship Between the  
 Individual and the Common Good  
**ABIGAIL BERIT HIDLEY**  
 Santa Paula, California

"It Is Not Good That the Man Should Be Alone":  
 An Inquiry into the Relationship of the City  
 and Its Members  
**KARINA ELAINE BIEGEL**  
 Anchorage, Alaska

The Humblest of Senses: On the Precision of Man's  
 Sense of Touch and Its Place in the Intellectual Life  
**THERESA MARIA DZIUBEK**  
 Terryville, Connecticut

America and Locke: "A House Divided  
 against Itself Cannot Stand"  
**ZACHARIAH THOMAS TULLOCH  
 HUCKINS**  
 Auburn, California

Every Creation Needs a Creator  
**JOHN KENNETH ELEAZAR BLEWETT**  
 Santa Paula, California

Evolution: A Thomistic Refutation  
**DAVID GEORGE EASTON**  
 Pilot Hill, California

"Some Are Roses, Some Are Daisies,  
 but All Have Their Place in the  
 Kingdom of Heaven":  
 The Parable of the Talents Teaches That  
 God Gives Sanctifying Grace Diversely  
**CECILIA MARIE KEREEKS**  
 Vista, California

*Viva El Sacerdote De Cristo*: A Catholic Defense of  
 Graham Greene's *The Power and the Glory*  
**ISAIAH AUGUSTINE BRITAIN**  
 Phoenix, Arizona

Thomas and Aristotle on Magnanimity and Humility  
**JESSICA ELLEFSON**  
 Ft. Wingate, New Mexico



“Taught according to the Order of the Subject Matter”: Immutability’s Placement in the Order of the Attributes

**NORA KATHLEEN MCCANN**  
Shirley, Massachusetts



Human and Animal Intelligence: The Cogitative Power of Thomas Aquinas

**GWYNETH FRANCESCA MCNIFF**  
Broad Run, Virginia



That Spousal Obligations Are Prior to Obligations of Friendship

**ELIZABETH FAITH MEANY**  
Washougal, Washington



The Union of Fine Art and Liberal Art: An Insight into the Fundamental Principles of Music

**EDWARD MCCARTHY MOHUN**  
Fillmore, California



Inertia and the Unmoved Mover: A Solution to the Apparent Opposition of Newton’s First Law and Aquinas’ First Way

**CLAIRE MARGARET MURPHY**  
Mission Viejo, California



Who is the “Serious Man”?

**MICHAEL ANDREW MURPHY**  
Cheshire, Connecticut



Mother of All the Living: How Mary’s Labor on Calvary Effected the Birth of the Mystical Body

**MARYBETH BRIGID O’CONNELL**  
New York, New York



The World in Words: An Understanding of Why “In” Truly Expresses the Relation of Signified and Sign

**MARCUS PORTO**  
Guarulhos, São Paulo, Brazil



The Objective Truth That Music’s Moral Meaning Is Subjective

**OSCAR URIEL RANGEL, JR.**  
Elk Grove, California



The Necessity of Precise Language for Understanding

**PAULINA AILEA REDULFIN**  
Venice, California



Man Is Ordered to a Community: A Defense against Rousseau

**ROBERT ANTHONY RICHARD**  
San Jose, California



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**EMMA MAIREAD SCHMITT**  
Leominster, Massachusetts

On Christ’s Appropriation of our Sins in the Garden of Gethsemane

**DAVID JOSEPH THOMAS KING**  
Brussels, Belgium

Can Beauty Save the World? An Analysis of the Role of Moral Virtue in the Enjoyment of Beauty

**MONICA JEANNINE KONIZESKI**  
Littleton, Colorado

“What Therefore God Hath Joined Together, Let No Man Put Asunder”:  
Marriage, the Greatest of Friendships

**ROSE MARIE LEMMON**  
Santa Paula, California

Blessed Are the Poor in Spirit: Capitalism and Catholicism

**JOSEPH JAMES LIND**  
Edina, Minnesota

Conscience and the Divine Compass

**MATTHEW GERARD LOEW**  
St. Marys, Kansas

*Simul Iustus et Peccator*: Man Is Justified by Faith Alone

**MICHAEL LUCKMANN**  
San Diego, California

A Mapmaker’s Guide to the Liberal Arts

**ANTONINA KRYSIANA NIZNIK**  
Calgary, Alberta, Canada

The Better Best Man: A Comparison of Aristotle’s Magnanimous Man and Nietzsche’s Superman

**SEAMUS PADRIAC O’BRIEN**  
Soldiers Grove, Wisconsin

The Role of Silence in the Repentance of Job

**MARIA THERESE PERRY**  
Delta, British Columbia, Canada

A Comparison of the Definitions of the Parabola As Given by Apollonius and Descartes

**ALEXANDER JOSEPH PFEIFFER**  
Waterford, Wisconsin

On the Individuality of the Separated Soul

**RACHEL PIPES**  
Wildwood, Missouri

Losing Sight of Our Human Nature: An Exposition of Epicurean Errors and Their Influence on Modern Gender Theory

**SARAH CATHERINE PIPES**  
St. Louis, Missouri

*Orthia Eidos*: The Role of the Upright Side in the *Conic Sections*

**VERITY ALEXANDRA POON**  
Pleasant Hill, California

The Division of the Arts: An Apology for Fine Art

**PETER HENRY AUGUSTINE REILLY**  
Inola, Oklahoma

Does it Matter? An Explication of the *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica* as the Work of a Student of Nature according to Aristotelian and Thomistic Principles

**EMMA LOUISE RUSSELL**  
Ojai, California

“Man and Woman He Created Them”: An Exploration of the Natural Virtues of Men and Women

**MARK ANTHONY SABADOS**  
Wexford, Pennsylvania

“Rejoice Insofar As You Share Christ’s Sufferings”: An Examination of the Christian’s Suffering

**HANNAH ELIZABETH BEATRICE SCHEXNAYDER**  
New Iberia, Louisiana

“Denied and Disparaged”:  
On the Mode of Rights-Protection Proper to the Ninth Amendment

**NICHOLAS SILVA**  
Santa Ana, California

English Equivocation Encouraged: How Christ as *Hostia* Makes Us Guests

**MORGAN RACHEL PATRICK SIMMS**  
Phoenix, Arizona

The Quest for Divinity: Achilles’ Struggle as a Representation of the Fallen Human State

**MARIA TERESA MAGDALENA SLADKY**  
Chester Gap, Virginia

The New Magnanimous Man

**PAUL SLUGOCKI**  
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada

“For What Does It Profit a Man If He Gain the Whole World but Lose His Soul?”  
An Examination of How Temporal Goods Are Only a Means to Happiness

**CLARE YVONNE TUTTLE**  
San Jose, California



The Preciousness  
of a Saintly Death  
**NICHOLAS DONALD  
SHALER**  
San Bernardino, California



Moral Virtue in the Life  
of a Catholic Intellectual  
**KATHERINE SULLIVAN**  
Toronto, Ohio



“You Must Love the Lord Your  
God with All Your Heart”:  
How Understanding Charity as a  
Kind of Friendship Saves Us from  
the Kantian Error Concerning  
Charity  
**RYAN JOSEPH UCHISON**  
Colfax, California



Inertia Is an Aristotelian  
Principle of Motion  
**BERNHARD ROBERT  
MICHAEL WALL**  
Mariposa, California



God vs. Atom: A Comparison  
of the Principles of Natural Law  
and the Nature of Man in the  
*Summa* versus the *Leviathan*  
**ROSE COLLEEN WALSH**  
Banks, Oregon



My Thesis ... or Is It? Man's Natural  
Right to Own His Ideas  
**ANNA KATE VICTORIA  
WELLS**  
St. Louis, Missouri



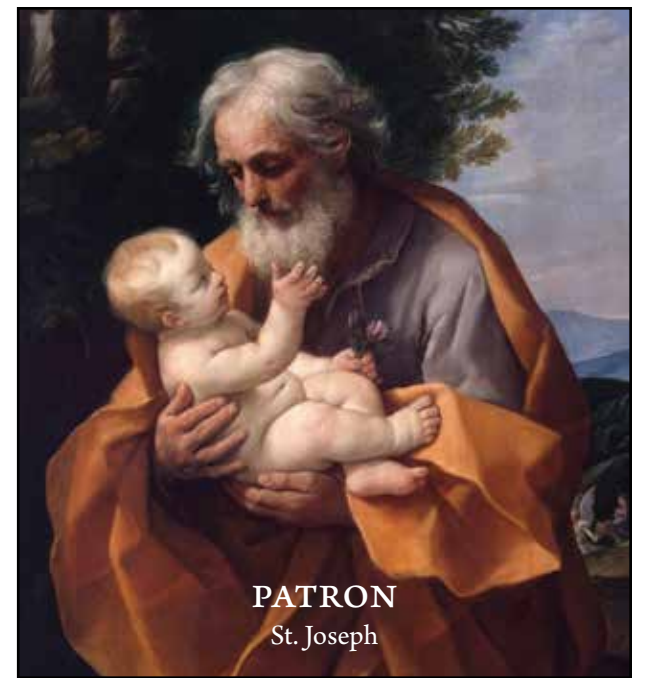
On the Balance of Society and  
Solitude in the Virtuous Life  
**JOSEPH MARK  
WIEBERSCH**  
Delafield, Wisconsin



Your Nature Is Not As Mine: A  
Defense and Contrast of Aesa  
Haraldsdatter Against Vigdis  
Gunnarsdatter  
**SYLVIA IRENE ZEPEDA**  
Alhambra, California

**QUOTATION**

*“Karamazov,’ cried Kolya, ‘can it be true what’s  
taught us in religion, that we shall all rise again from the dead  
and shall live and see each other again, all, Ilusha too?’  
‘Certainly we shall all rise again, certainly we shall see each other  
and shall tell each other with joy and gladness all that has happened!’  
Alyosha answered, half laughing, half enthusiastic.”*



**PATRON**  
St. Joseph





# Three Suggestions to Save Your Soul — and Others

## Bishop Barber's Commencement 2020 Address

*This text is adapted from the address that the Most Rev. Michael C. Barber, S.J., Bishop of Oakland, gave at Thomas Aquinas College's 2020 Commencement on May 29, 2021. For audio and the full text of the address, see [thomasaquinas.edu/commencement2020](http://thomasaquinas.edu/commencement2020).*

**T**hank you, President McLean; and first, I would like to thank the founders, trustees, and benefactors for creating this college and supporting it. Thomas Aquinas College is what a Catholic college is supposed to be. Thank you for fighting to uphold your Catholic principles.

You have created here what a Catholic college is supposed to be. That was recently summed up to me — what a Catholic school should be, whether it's an elementary school, a high school, or a university. I was going to Safeway, outside the U.S. Naval Base in Bangor, Washington, to get some groceries, and there was a big banner outside and a table, where volunteers were taking signups for a local parochial school. The banner had a picture of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, and it said, "Good Shepherd School: For a Christ-centered education." That's what a Catholic school is supposed to be.

So where do we go from here? Where do you go from here? You have already started your journey, as technically you graduated last year. I would just like to give you my personal advice as a priest, as a bishop, and as a fellow Catholic.

I want you to reach the resurrection. St. Ignatius of Loyola said, "Why does a young man enter the Jesuits? First, to save his soul." I want you to save your souls. But second: "To help others save their souls." And if you are a Christian, you are commanded by Christ not just to save your own soul, but to assist others in achieving the resurrection in saving their souls.

Well, how do you do that today in the present state of the Catholic Church in the world? I only have three suggestions.

### ***Worship the Lord, Feed Your Soul***

First, worship the Lord, and thus feed your soul. Find a church, a Catholic church, where the Mass is celebrated with reverence and holiness, like here. Find a parish where the priest has restored the sacred. Find that parish where you experience the presence of Christ.

You may say, "Well, the Mass is the Mass; it's always holy." That's true, but you shouldn't have to close your eyes and plug your ears and say, "I can at least go to Holy Communion and get through this." I know the current state of affairs; I have 84 churches in my diocese. I went to one in my first round of confirmations eight years ago, and after, I told the pastor that the music was so loud, so obnoxious, so irreverent, and so offensive that if I were not the bishop, I would never come to Mass in this church again.

What is the Mass supposed to be like? Pope Francis said it well in his homily for the Feast of the Transfiguration in 2014. The Holy Father said, "Every Mass should be an experience like the Apostles had at the Transfiguration, an experience of heaven on earth, a place, *the* place, where heaven and earth meet — a taste on earth of the glory of the Lord." I believe that is why the Lord gave the Apostles this experience of His glory on that mountain-top, to strengthen them later when they experienced His passion, and then their own passion.

How does the Church create this place of heaven on earth?

First, through the beauty of sacred architecture, like you have in this chapel. I felt like Mother Angelica the first time she visited a television set when I first went into your chapel. I said, "Lord, I gotta have one of these." The confessors who man the confessionals in St. Peter's in Rome say they are approached by tourists every year who ask them, "How do I join a church that could create such beauty?"

We create the holy also through sacred music, like you

sang this morning at the Mass. How many people have I met who have come back to the Faith, who have converted to the Church, or who drive by five other parishes to come to a church where they have a spectacular, beautiful choir singing Gregorian chant and polyphony?

We also create the holy through the reverence of the ministers, and our souls are also fed through an intelligent homily. I tell my priests, "The better your golf score, the worse are your homilies." When you find such a parish, please support the priests who run it.

The parishes where they restore the sacred, where the Mass is celebrated reverently, they grow, while other parishes are shrinking and closing. Remember what Cardinal Newman said: "Growth is the only evidence of life." Help those parishes grow. If you can't find one like I just described, go to your priest and encourage him to create it.

### ***Practice Works of Mercy***

My second piece of advice is: Practice the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. We don't have time to list them all, but I'll just point out two.

One is one of the spiritual works of mercy, and that is "Instruct the ignorant." Our graduates — my graduates — if you want to change the world, if you want to change the Catholic Church for the better, teach First Holy Communion class in your parish. Teach Confirmation class in your parish. Use this outstanding education you have received here at TAC to pass on the Catholic faith to the next generation in its fullness.

They say up to 70 percent of Catholics do not believe in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Teach those little children the mystery of Jesus present in the Blessed Sacrament that you experienced here. In Con-

**"Mercy is attractive. Christ spent most of His earthly mission healing and feeding people. Even if people do not know or share our doctrine, they are drawn to our charitable works, to our works of mercy."**

firmation class, you can help our teens by answering the objections they hear all about God and the Church from their friends at school.

Practice the spiritual and the corporal works of mercy. Of the corporal works, I will just mention one: "Feed the hungry."

In 2016 Pope Francis proclaimed a Year of Mercy for the whole church. I asked all the eighth graders in our Catholic grammar schools in my diocese to do a project on one of the Corporal Works of Mercy and then write and tell me what they did. One boy wrote: "Bishop, today I made 100 sandwiches for the homeless, and when I walked home from school, I felt lighter than a kite." I wrote him back, "You experienced spiritual consolation, young man, for when you practice a spiritual work of mercy, a corporal work of mercy, you are connecting yourself with the Heart of Mercy in Jesus that is in heaven. Then that mercy flows through you to someone who is in need. You become a channel of mercy from Jesus to the poor and suffering. That's why you feel so good."

At our diocesan St. Vincent de Paul soup kitchen I was handing out trays of food, and I asked the volunteer next to me, "What parish do you belong to?" And he said, "Oh, I'm not Catholic. I'm Jewish. But I really like being here."

"I really like being here." Mercy is attractive. Christ spent most of His earthly mission healing and feeding people. Even if people do not know or share our doctrine, they are drawn to our charitable works, to our works of mercy.

### ***Be a Missionary Disciple***

This leads to my third and last suggestion: Be a missionary disciple. We usually look to the Mormons as the



religion that does outreach. We Catholics are more hesitant. It doesn't come natural to us. Faith with us is more personal. But Jesus did command us: "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." It was a command. Jesus told the Apostles, "I will make you fishers of men." To follow the command of Jesus, we have to go fishing.

One person who exemplifies these three essentials for me, one of my heroes, is Margaret Roper, St. Thomas More's daughter. She was regarded as "the most learned woman in England" because she had the best teacher: her father. Her father raised her in sound and deep piety, and even though the priests in their village may have been simpletons, the Mores attended Mass daily.

She was a missionary disciple in that she refused to abjure her Catholicism. She stood up for the Faith and did not take the oaths declaring Henry VIII head of the Church. Many people were moved by her example, but most impressively, she practiced the corporal works of mercy to a heroic degree.

At the time of the persecution, a whole monastery of Carthusian monks was arrested and imprisoned in the Tower of London. The white-robed Carthusian order, the strictest in the Church, the most devout, with the strictest amount of penance: These monks were imprisoned in the Tower for refusing to recognize Henry VIII as head of the Church. As part of their punishment, they were chained with their arms behind them and their legs together, and they were denied all food and water, left to die a slow death. Margaret disguised herself as a milkmaid, bribed a guard to get into their cell, and — at the risk of her own life — she went monk by monk, feeding them with morsels of food and with drinks of water, because they could not feed themselves. You can hear those monks' cries of joy, thanking her and blessing her. They were so happy and grateful.

They all eventually died, canonized martyrs for the Faith.

Margaret escaped to Belgium to raise her family in safety. Some years later she became seriously ill, and there was nothing the doctors could do for her. She was on her deathbed; her death was near; she was surrounded by her family; when all of a sudden she startled up off her pillow and said, "Look! The white-robed brothers — they're here! They're here!"

Then she died, aged 39. The Carthusians remembered and came back for her.

*If you were raised with Christ, seek what is above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Think of what is above, not of what is on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ your life appears, then you too will appear with Him in glory (Col, 3:1-4).*

# For the Greater Glory of God

## An Interview with the Most Rev. Michael C. Barber, S.J.

Note: The Most Rev. Michael C. Barber, S.J., Bishop of Oakland, was Thomas Aquinas College's 2020 Commencement Speaker.

### How has the Diocese of Oakland fared during the pandemic?

Well, we haven't had any priest deaths, but we have had about a dozen priests get very sick, and some parishioners have died. One of the hardest things about the pandemic was priests not being able to have access to anoint people and give them the Last Rites. A lot of people told me they were not able to visit their mothers or fathers on their deathbeds, and so it was really hard to say goodbye.

As far as Mass attendance, we have pretty much followed the county and state guidelines. It was very hard when we couldn't have anybody indoors and we were doing livestreamed Masses from the cathedral. People still came and pressed their faces to the glass window outside the cathedral, and we would take Communion outside afterward.

We tried everything we could to tell people, "We're still open for you." We would have drive-through Communion. We would have walk-up Communion. We had drive-in Anointing of the Sick, and people brought the elderly in their cars. I think the people were grateful for the outreach. A few parishes did no outreach; the pastor shut the doors and posted a sign "We're closed." That's not right, and those churches are now in bad shape. But in general the priests were very good, and things are going well.

### Can you tell us about how you met Thomas Aquinas College's onetime chaplain Fr. Buckley when you were a young man?

When I was in high school in Sacramento, a friend and I attended a Jesuit vocation retreat led by Fr. Buckley, who was then the rector-president of St. Ignatius High School in San Francisco. Well, about one year later he drove out to my high school to visit me as a follow-up to the retreat. I was just stunned. I was in a class, and the principal came to the door, called me over, and says, "There's a priest here, a Jesuit, who wants to see you." And Fr. Buckley said to me, "Can we have a little chat? I just want to encourage you." I said, "Wow, did you have business in Sacramento?" And he said, "No, I wanted to just come and check in. I hope you'll persevere in your desire to be a Jesuit." That made quite an impression on me — the rector president, a Jesuit priest — what I wanted to be. Wow.

### What inspired you to become a Jesuit at that time, when the Order was beginning to struggle?

The Order was still holding together in most of the communities and schools when I was exploring, and it was only after I entered it that the struggles really began to progress. But the charisma that St. Ignatius brought to the Church is, I think, for all the Church and for all time: "Do all for the greater glory of God," total devotion to any mission given by the Holy Father. Defend and spread the Catholic faith. Do any kind of ministry: teaching, or missionary work, or science, or communication, or videos — even YouTube — *anything* that will help bring the Gospel to people and people to Christ.

### Your first assignment was as a missionary in Samoa. How did that come about, and what was it like there?

Well, I had taught as a scholastic in Micronesia at Xavier High School in Truk in the Caroline Islands, and I really loved the mission work and the school there. The cardinal in Samoa, which is in Polynesia, was thinking of having the Jesuits make a foundation there. So I was sent in to "go try it out and see." I spent two years there.

I really loved it, but then I went to Rome for studies, and what I found was that, in the mission lands today,



### The motto on your coat of arms is "God, the Father of Mercies." Can you explain why you chose that and what it means?

Yes! "God, the Father of Mercies." I chose it because for 12 years I was spiritual director in seminaries and was confessor to seminarians. So every day I would say the prayer of absolution, which begins, "God, the Father of Mercies, through the death and resurrection of His son ..." Those are the last words I want to hear before I die, words that will help me more than anything else. So I chose them as my motto.

### As Bishop of Oakland, you have prioritized bolstering the Catholic character in diocesan schools. What steps have you taken?

The first step is to evangelize the staff — principals and those who do the hiring — and then evangelize the teachers. So that's a work in progress: to share my vision of Catholic education, what it means, and what the implications are. We have also revised our hiring contracts. That's what drew TV cameras and stoked protests from certain families that didn't appreciate the Catholic identity because they weren't Catholic. But are our schools supposed to be non-denominational? Or are they supposed to be missions of the Church to hand on the Faith to the next generation?

### And your answer is ...

The Faith! I'm not interested in running a private prep school. And I tell that to the teachers: "If you don't agree with the teachings of our faith, then this isn't the place for you. Go teach at Sunnyside Public School or the charter school. But here, this school is an extension of the Catholic Church; it's part of the Catholic Church. Your classroom is a pulpit, and the Supreme Court has defined teachers as "ministers of religion."

That's why I encouraged TAC's graduates to please volunteer to teach catechism to our young people, especially for kids in parish First Communion and Confirmation classes. Otherwise you can't complain at a cocktail party, "Oh, kids today don't know the Faith. They don't know what they're doing when they come up for Holy Communion," or, "Kids come for Confirmation, but they don't know why," or, "They're wearing baseball hats in church." Well, yes, kids do those things because no one took the time to get in there and teach them the Faith. Or they had teachers who didn't know the Faith. I've heard some college students complain that when they went to their parish for CCD, the lessons consisted of "Love God, draw a rainbow." There was no content. Our religious-ed classes need to be more than a pizza and a movie.

### Pope Francis recently issued *Antiquum Ministerium*, establishing the Ministry of Catechist. Will that help bishops evangelize the teachers?

Yes. I think it's a great idea. It's emphasizing something that really belongs to laypeople, and they can do it very well. It's also a cry for help — "Please, come, get trained; we will help train you to hand on the Faith. Please come. Our young people need you."

We have lots of training programs; every diocese does. There are two goals: teaching the content of the Faith and helping young people fall in love with Christ, to form a relationship with Him. Mind and heart are both important. We need to lead the students in both. I so believe in what you're doing here at Thomas Aquinas College. Your graduates know the teachings of the Faith — and your graduates clearly have a loving relationship with the Lord. They are a real asset to the parishes they will live and worship in after graduation. What a pleasure it will be for a pastor to hear "Father, may I help teach First Communion or Confirmation?"

they have plenty of vocations. The Church is growing; convents and seminaries are packed in Africa, India, Polynesia — but in America and Europe? We're the new mission lands. So I wanted to talk to the students at your graduation about being local missionaries, reaching out here. This is more challenging. There's more unbelief, more "nones," and more hostility to our faith. It's right here in our backyard.

### What role do reverent liturgies and sacred music play in this mission work, in building up strong Catholic communities in our backyard?

The parishes with reverent liturgies and sacred music are the ones that thrive. People support those parishes. They drive across town to go to them.

In our cathedral we do a very beautiful liturgy. We have a full-time paid choir that does Palestrina and Mozart, and a concert organist who is the director of music. It's an English Novus Ordo Mass, with the *Kyrie* and *Gloria* in Greek and Latin, plus a lot of Gregorian chant. But it shows that the Novus Ordo can be done reverently and well. You see the same at the National Shrine in Washington, D.C.; you see it at the Cathedral of St. Michael in Toronto; you see it at the Cathedral of the Madeleine in Salt Lake City; you see it at St. Paul's in Boston, where they have the Boys' Choir from Cambridge. You see it all around.

As much as I love the Tridentine Mass, you don't have to go to the Tridentine Mass to find reverence and sacredness. Look at what the Canons Regular of St. John Cantius are doing in Chicago. They have some Latin Novus Ordo Masses, some Tridentine Masses in Latin, some Masses in English — they have something like 12 choirs — and it's all sacred. It's all holy. And they are booming in attendance.

### How did you come to be a commissioned officer in the U.S. Navy?

I was in the Navy for 27 years, 1991 to 2018. I joined it to be a modern missionary in our country, as I just said. It was 1991, during the first Gulf War. I was stationed in Rome as a student priest, doing my studies at the Gregorian, and they were looking for American priests in Rome to go down to Naples and say Mass for Catholic sailors on Navy warships that were on their way to the Middle East. The sailors would pick me up, drive me down, and I would say Mass for the ship's company. When I left one ship, the captain said, "Father, next time you come, we've got to get you some gold stripes here to go on your sleeves," meaning, "I hope you'll sign up."

So I talked to some Navy chaplains, and I felt moved by the Holy Spirit to ask my Jesuit superiors if they would allow me to join the Reserves, and they said yes. As a Navy chaplain you are a commissioned officer, and that gives you access to all the sailors and departments of a ship or base; you're part of the commanding officer's staff. You can go anywhere on the ship or on the Marine base, and you're the chaplain for everyone in the command, not just Catholics.

# In Her Own Words

## Remembering Cecilia Davidson ('20)



Note: The text below is a thank-you letter that Cecilia Davidson ('20), who passed way in September, wrote to benefactors of Thomas Aquinas College during her Senior Year. Please keep Cecilia, her family, and her many grieving friends in your prayers.

Dear Benefactors,

I am writing to thank you for your generous contributions to my education at Thomas Aquinas College. As a senior with only a few months left, I have a deepened perspective on the gratitude I owe to you and to many others for my time here.

Looking back, the word that I think best characterizes my time here is *faith*. It was a leap of faith that brought me here, which made me put aside my safe, easy to understand, universally approvable plans (which included

“Now looking back it is incredible to see all the ways in which I have grown, ways which I could never in 1 million years have anticipated.”

going to a larger Catholic college and earning a degree in nursing) in favor of something much harder to explain to my family and friends.

It may have been difficult for me to express, but somehow I knew in my heart that I wanted what Thomas Aquinas College has to offer: a chance to live the academic life in a radical and wholehearted way, to engage the greatest minds of history in the most important questions, and to give myself up, for a while at least, to the study of the most sublime and fundamental things. I used to have a sweatshirt with the old motto of the school, “Truth Matters,” and that, in the end, is why I decided to come. Truth does matter. It mattered to me, and so I took a leap and

followed the truth here.

Even after I made the choice to come, however, I found that all of my time at Thomas Aquinas College required an act of faith in one way or another. Faith in the curriculum and plan of the school, faith in the rules, and faith in the process, which at times can seem unnecessarily hard and long.

The “study of the most sublime and fundamental things” is not always as glamorous or exciting as it sounds. It requires a lot of discipline to be dutiful in schoolwork that seems boring or pointless at the time, and a lot of faith to believe that even Latin grammar or obeying a curfew can be a step toward wisdom. Any trust I placed in the College, however, was always rewarded tenfold, and now looking back it is incredible to see all the ways in which I have grown, ways which I could never in 1 million years have anticipated, and which I owe solely to the wisdom of the school.

And finally, *faith* is the right word to sum up my time here because, ultimately, everything that we do at Thomas Aquinas College is about the Faith.

In the first semester of Senior Theology, we study St. Thomas’ account of the Trinity, which, as you may imagine, is a difficult and technical consideration (at least, if you want to avoid being a heretic). My professor would encourage us, after almost every class, to *pray* to the Holy



Spirit before sitting down to do our homework. This practice always helped me to remember that, although we treat theology as a science, we can never forget that it is a science concerning our creator and lord and savior, and that the purpose of studying it, in the end, is to bring us closer to Him.

This is true of all we study at Thomas Aquinas College. It is all connected, and it is all ordered to the knowledge of God and of ourselves in relation to God. The more that I have studied, the more I have become convinced that

“The more that I have studied, the more I have become convinced that Truth is *one*.”

Truth is *one*. This is an idea which our society has largely discarded, and I couldn’t imagine anything more important for me to carry with me as I go out into the world.

Now, I don’t want to give you the wrong impression — this college hasn’t given me all the answers, far from it. It’s still sinking in to me that in a few short months I will have to leave here, and with so many things still to figure out! But I know that I’ve been given the foundation I need to go forward, to pursue my dreams of becoming a nurse, and to live and serve others in the best way that I can.

My younger brother is now in the middle of his freshman year at a similar Catholic liberal arts college, and we talked a lot over Christmas break about why this education is important and whether it is necessary. My answer basically boiled down to this: It’s not necessary, and you can be a good person and a good Catholic without it. But, as far as I can tell, the world is only getting more distracting, and more confusing, and more dark. And I can’t think of anything that would better prepare me to

“go gaily in the dark,” as Chesterton says, than the time that I have spent here at Thomas Aquinas College.

So, for everything that you have done to support me and all of my fellow students, thank you from the bottom of my heart! I will continue to keep you and all the benefactors of the College in my prayers.

Sincerely,  
Cecilia



# “Bestow Your Special Blessings Upon Them”

## Fr. Buckley’s Benediction for the Class of 2020

*Note: After nearly 17 years of service and at the age of 95, Rev. Cornelius M. Buckley, S.J., retired as a Thomas Aquinas College chaplain this fall. He now resides at the Sacred Heart Jesuit Center in Los Gatos, California.*

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, amen.

Heavenly Father, living here in California, one of the blessings that You have given us is spacious, nearby vineyards, reflecting Your glory and inviting us to contemplate Your Providence. After ripening, bunches of grapes are harvested, crushed, and the juices poured into vats to spend time fermenting; the longer the fermentation, the sweeter the wine. Then it’s bottled and put out to bring joy to many.

But we are gathered here today to celebrate the vagaries of a bunch of students, not the fate of a bunch of grapes. After four long years of tutor training, they were happily harvested, then crushed — and for more than a year they have been fast fermenting, dreaming of the day when they would be poured into graduation gowns and corked with funny caps. That day has come; thank you, Lord.

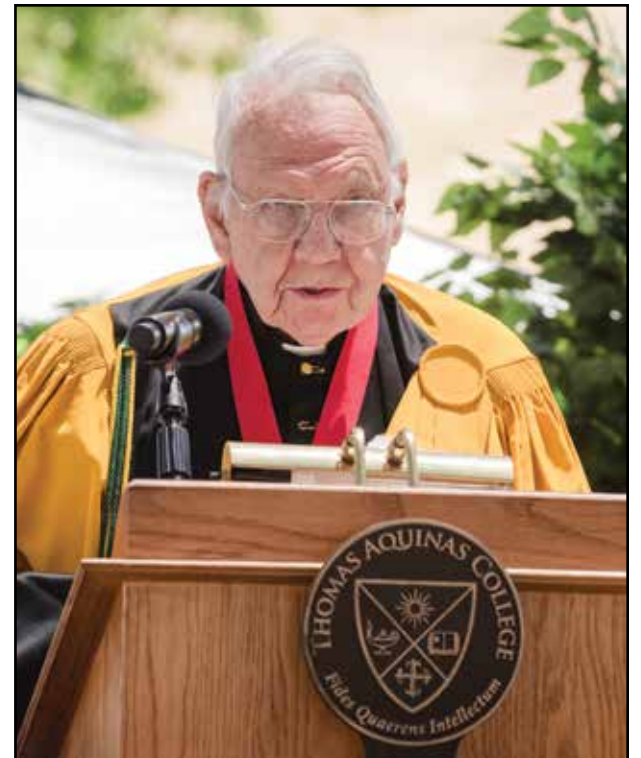
A few moments ago, each one of them stood before the crowd, flipped the tassel on his or her cap from right to left, from past to future, and walked down the stairs to the place Providence had assigned them. The action was symbolic. We ask You to bestow Your special blessings

“A few moments ago, each one of them stood before the crowd, flipped the tassel on his or her cap from right to left, from past to future.”

upon them, heal the wounds of the past, and give them the encouragement, strength, and hope to carry out the tasks that you have assigned each one of them: that is, to be a source of joy and grace, of good sense, of humor in our woke world of cancel culture.

We ask You also to bless the parents of our graduates, especially those who are here today. These parents, with love and affection and strength, have formed all of them. And we thank you for those at the College who have made this day so memorable: our president, our dean, the Board of Governors, the workers who have set up the tents and the altar, and those who have prepared to serve food, those who have helped to make the garden reflect Your glory, and especially our benefactors, whose hidden presence makes all of this happen.

We beg also of You to give a special blessing to Bishop Michael Barber for being the main celebrant of our graduation and for his inspiring and challenging message. His day as a Navy chaplain was spent chiefly serving the United



States Marines, and that has prepared him to care — *semper fidelis* — for the sheep on the wrong side of San Francisco Bay.

We make this parting prayer through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Joseph, St. Thomas Aquinas, our guardian angels, and all the saints, and in the name of Your son, Jesus Christ, Who has shown us Your truth and love, enabling us here present to be messengers of the Gospel.

And may the blessings of Almighty God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, come upon you all and remain with you forever.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, amen.



## Commencement 2020 Keepsakes!

Order photos and portraits at [thomasaquinas.edu/commencement2020](http://thomasaquinas.edu/commencement2020)



### Calendar of Events

Dedication of Our Mother of Perpetual Help Chapel ..... March 7  
 The Most Rev. William D. Byrne  
 Bishop of Springfield, Massachusetts, presiding

California Commencement.....May 14

New England Commencement.....May 21

California High School Summer Program.....July 10-23  
[thomasaquinas.edu/summerprogram](http://thomasaquinas.edu/summerprogram)

New England High School Summer Program .....July 24-August 6  
[thomasaquinas.edu/summerprogram](http://thomasaquinas.edu/summerprogram)

For more information, please see [www.thomasaquinas.edu/events](http://www.thomasaquinas.edu/events)