

THOMAS AQUINAS COLLEGE SPRING 2022

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*“What the founders
of the College were
professing constituted
the real counterculture.”*

— U.S. Supreme Court
Justice Samuel A. Alito
50th Anniversary Gala



Dr. Paul J. O'Reilly ('84) Named TAC's Next President

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Our Mother of Perpetual Help Chapel, New England campus

FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT

A New Look for the Newsletter

Showcasing the True, the Good — and the Beautiful

By the time this issue has gone to press — but before it arrives in your mailboxes — Thomas Aquinas College will have achieved another important milestone in its eastward expansion, with the dedication of Our Mother of Perpetual Help Chapel on the New England campus. Meanwhile, our first New England students have entered the second semester of their senior year, and in May we will celebrate the College's first-ever Commencement exercises in Northfield, Massachusetts.

In California, we are nearing the completion of the Pope St. John Paul II Athletic Center. Our Development Office is preparing for the largest, most ambitious capital campaign in TAC history, designed to put the College on sound financial footing and ensure the needs of our two campuses for years to come. Taking the helm during this busy time will be my able colleague, friend, and onetime student, Dr. Paul J. O'Reilly, who will succeed me as president after I step aside following our two graduations.

All of which is to say that there is no shortage of news emanating from Thomas Aquinas College these days — indeed, there is more than ever. There are also more ways than ever to receive that news, including our website, monthly e-letter, and social-media channels. As always, however, the cornerstone of our communication efforts is this quarterly newsletter, now newly redesigned.

For reasons having to do with printing and mailing, the newsletter's former and beloved broadsheet format could not exceed 12 pages. Yet with the new magazine format, the newsletter — which now must report the happenings of two campuses on two coasts — can go as long as necessary. As such, we will no longer need to withhold important stories or shorten thoughtful articles and interviews with Church prelates. The new format, which allows for greater design flexibility, will likewise enable us to include more and larger photos, thus better depicting the beauty and reflecting the life of the College.

Since its founding, Thomas Aquinas College has been committed to sharing the true, the good, and the beautiful, not only with our students, but also with our alumni, families, benefactors, and other friends. This new format, we hope, will aid our efforts with regard to the third of these transcendentals, and perhaps even the first two as well.

This is, of course, a work in progress. Your gracious comments and suggestions are most welcome. Send them to newsletter@thomasaquinas.edu.

Sincerely,

Michael F. McLean, Ph.D.
President



“Since its founding, Thomas Aquinas College has been committed to sharing the true, the good, and the beautiful, not only with our students, but also with our alumni, families, benefactors, and other friends.”

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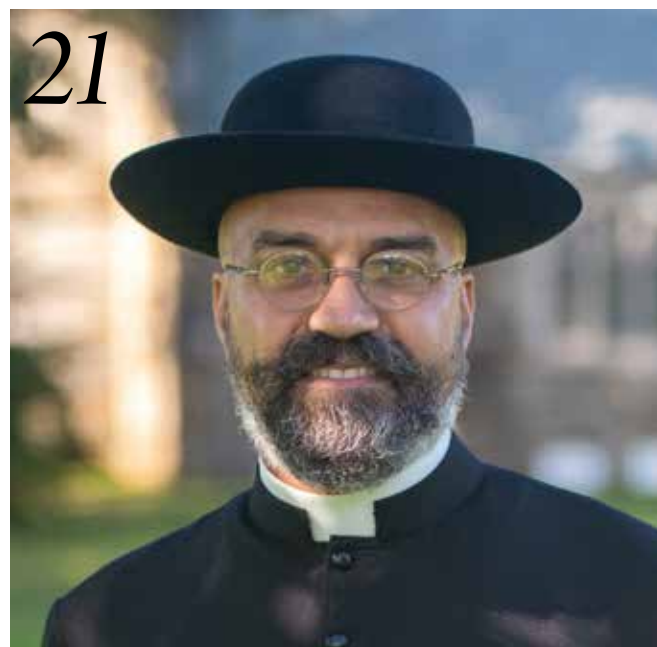
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Dr. Paul J. O'Reilly ('84) Named President

30-Year Veteran of Teaching Faculty is
also a Graduate and TAC Parent

In a unanimous vote, the Board of Governors has appointed Dr. Paul J. O'Reilly ('84) as the next president of Thomas Aquinas College — the first alumnus to hold that position in the school's 50-year history.

"We selected Paul to lead the many constituencies of the College due to his vision, enthusiasm, and experience," says Scott Turicchi, chairman of the Board of Governors. "Given his varied talents and my interaction with him over many years, I have the utmost confidence in his ability to guide the College, and I look forward to collaborating with him."

A 30-year member of the teaching faculty and the current vice president for advancement, Dr. O'Reilly first came to the College in 1980, shortly after his family fled to North America to escape the Troubles in Northern Ireland. "Thomas Aquinas College taught me the importance of clear thinking, confident reasoning, and commitment to truth," he reflects. "Life in the TAC community also showed me the importance of a structured and principled way of living."

Although he expected to pursue a career in business, the College's program

of Catholic liberal education drew him in a different direction. Within one year of his graduation, Dr. O'Reilly married classmate Peggy (Steichen '84) and moved to Quebec, where he earned master's and doctoral degrees in philosophy at the Université Laval. He then taught for two years at Saint Anselm College in Manchester, New Hampshire, before returning to Thomas Aquinas College as a member of the teaching faculty in 1989. From 1995 to 1999 he also served as assistant dean.

In 2011 President Michael F. McLean named Dr. O'Reilly vice president for development, a position he held until 2020, when he became vice president for advancement. "I have had the privilege of working closely with Paul for many years, most recently for the past 10 or so in his capacity as vice president," says Dr. McLean. "I know him to be an excellent tutor, an effective fundraiser, and a man fully committed to the mission of Thomas Aquinas College. He has been a fine ambassador for the College, and he is highly regarded by our students and alumni."

Among his accomplishments as vice president, Dr. O'Reilly helped to secure funding for the addition of three new



buildings on the California campus: St. Gladys Hall, the St. Cecilia Lecture and Concert Hall, and the Pope St. John Paul II Athletic Center. He was also instrumental in obtaining the grant through which the College received its New England campus in 2017, and has since visited Northfield, Massachusetts, often to oversee the renovation of buildings and meet with faculty and benefactors.

Whereas most American colleges and universities conduct nationwide, or even international, searches for their presidents, the College's bylaws require that its chief executive be chosen from among senior members of the teaching faculty, so as to safeguard the institution's commitment to liberal education taught under the light of the Catholic faith, or — in the words of St. Anselm that serve as the College's motto — "faith seeking understanding." The process for choosing the new president began last year, when the College's Instruction Committee appointed a three-member Faculty Committee on Presidential Candidates, and it involved extensive consultation between the Board and the faculty over several months of interviews and deliberation.

"I am especially grateful to my colleagues on the faculty and on the Board who worked diligently and thoughtfully throughout the presidential-selection process, always in fidelity to the College's mission," says Dr. O'Reilly. "It is part of the genius of our founders' vision that they created a process to ensure that Thomas Aquinas College never loses sight of its

purpose, which is why the College continues to hold strong when so many other institutions have foundered over the last half century."

"Thomas Aquinas College taught me the importance of clear thinking, confident reasoning, and commitment to truth."

In addition to being an alumnus of the College, Dr. O'Reilly is a TAC parent. He and Mrs. O'Reilly have 12 children, five of whom are current students or alumni, including a senior on the New England campus and a sophomore in California. "I intend to use my experience as an alumnus and a father of TAC students to ensure

that the College will preserve its mission and the traditions that make it a place that gives rise to vocations, wholesome marriages, and remarkable young people who will transform this world," he says.

Dr. O'Reilly will be the College's fifth president, following Founding President Dr. Ronald P. McArthur (1971 – 1991), Dr. Thomas E. Dillon (1991 – 2009), Peter L. DeLuca (2009 – 2010), and Dr. McLean. "It is an honor to carry on the great work of the presidents who have preceded me, from Dr. McArthur up through Dr. McLean," he says. He will not formally take office until after the College's two graduations and will transition into his new role alongside Dr. McLean, who intends to return to the classroom.

"I have been working closely with Paul during this period of transition," says Dr. McLean. "I am confident that he will be an outstanding leader of the College."

"As we celebrate our 50th anniversary and the growth of our New England campus, the future of TAC is promising," says Dr. O'Reilly. "May God bless our efforts, and I ask for your prayers." ❖



Right: Dr. O'Reilly and his wife, Peggy (Steichen '84, right), with friends of the College at the 2021 Summer Seminar weekend on the California campus

50 years

Justice Alito, Friends Celebrate Thomas Aquinas College at Anniversary Gala

With U.S. Supreme Court Justice Samuel A. Alito, Jr. serving as keynote speaker, friends of Thomas Aquinas College gathered in Beverly Hills on October 16 to celebrate the College's golden anniversary.

"The story of the founding of Thomas Aquinas College is a remarkable one," said Justice Alito, noting that TAC's founders created an institution dedicated to upholding the Catholic intellectual tradition and reasoned discourse at a time when much of

academia was jettisoning both. "What the founders of the College were professing constituted the real counterculture."

More than 600 friends of the College — including members of the Board of Governors, alumni, students, faculty, staff, and visiting clergy and religious — attended the 50th Anniversary Gala at the historic Beverly Wilshire Hotel. They joyfully shared memories about the

College, dating back to its kickoff dinner in 1970 with Ven. Fulton Sheen and its humble beginnings on a rented campus in Calabasas. They delighted in a performance by the College's California choir, and they cheered Justice Alito's gracious salute to all who have worked to make



Chairman of the Board of Governors Scott Turicchi and his wife, Lannette; U.S. Supreme Court Justice Samuel A. Alito and his wife, Martha-Ann; and President Michael F. McLean and his wife, Lynda

its accomplishments possible.

The event began with an invocation from a longtime friend of the College, the Right Rev. Eugene Hayes, O.Praem., Abbot of St. Michael's Abbey in Silverado, California. "Good and loving God, we praise You this evening for the founding of Thomas Aquinas College five decades ago," the Abbot prayed, "and for its flourishing ever since, up to our own day."

From there, Chairman of the Board of Governors Scott Turicchi and

his wife, Lannette — who, along with Maria and Richard Grant, co-chaired the Gala Committee — took to the stage to offer a toast. "I would like us to give thanks to God for the founders of Thomas Aquinas College, who took great risks and had enormous trust in divine providence," said Mr. Turicchi. "Please join me in raising your glasses as we give thanks to almighty God for His generous outpouring of blessings on Thomas Aquinas College."

Next to offer a toast was Alumni Association President Peter Colarelli ('92), who recalled that the College "didn't just teach you the good, the true, and the beautiful, but how to seek out these treasures." Then, speaking on behalf of mothers and fathers of TAC students past and present, Parents' Association President Paula Cummings thanked all those whose efforts have made "Thomas Aquinas College the God-centered, intellectually excellent, and joy-filled institution that it is."

Before introducing Justice Alito, President Michael F. McLean reflected on "God's abiding providence" in allowing the College and its program of Catholic liberal education to thrive for these last 50 years. "We look forward with great anticipation to another 50 years of Thomas Aquinas College's playing a leading role in Catholic education, witnessing to the Gospel, remaining faithful to the teachings of the Church, and preparing students for responsible citizenship."

At the beginning of his warm and thoughtful keynote address, Justice Alito acknowledged the extreme difficulties of founding a college amid the academic and cultural turmoil of the late 1960s and early 1970s, which has largely continued and expanded over the ensuing five decades. He praised Thomas Aquinas College's founders for their fortitude as well as their foresight, anticipating societal problems that its future alumni would be uniquely equipped to address. With even today's highly trained attorneys often lacking the ability to persuade through rational argumentation, the Justice continued, the need for TAC graduates has never been greater.

"For 50 years Thomas Aquinas College has been on a quest for truth," Justice Alito concluded. "May it continue that quest for 50 more years, and 50 years after that, and 50 years after that, and many more years to come. Happy anniversary, Thomas Aquinas College!"

"I would like us to give thanks to God for the founders of Thomas Aquinas College, who took great risks and had enormous trust in divine providence."

— Scott Turicchi
Chairman of the Board of Governors

After attendees rose to give the Justice a sustained standing ovation, the lights fell, and a new video — recounting the history and accomplishments of Thomas Aquinas College — played on several large screens stationed throughout the ballroom. The festivities then came to a close, fittingly, with a prayer, as one of the College's new friends, the Most Rev. Thomas John Paprocki, Bishop of Springfield, Illinois, and the 2021 Commencement Speaker, delivered the benediction.

"We thank You for the blessings that You have bestowed on Thomas Aquinas College over these past 50 years and for the graces You have showered upon the founders, students, tutors, administrative faculty, staff, alumni, board, and benefactors," His Excellency said. "As we go forth from here, we ask Your blessing upon all our future endeavors." ❖



Above: Members of the Board of Governors Esther Wachtell and Dr. Tom Krause Middle: Members of the Board of Governors Dieter Huckestein and John Guinee with their wives, Cecilia and Kara Lower: President Michael F. McLean welcomes U.S. Supreme Court Justice Samuel A. Alito



50th ANNIVERSARY GALA



A TOWN HALL WITH The Honorable Samuel A. Alito

U.S. Supreme Court Justice Shares Thoughts on Faith and Originalism with TAC Students



The day after serving as keynote speaker at Thomas Aquinas College's 50th Anniversary Gala, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Samuel A. Alito, Jr., and his wife, Martha-Ann, visited the College's California campus. After attending Mass in Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel and lunch with College officials and their spouses, the Justice participated in an hour-long town hall with President Michael F. McLean.

"How happy I am to be here," reflected Justice Alito before an audience of some 400 students, faculty, and staff in St. Cecilia Lecture and Concert Hall. "I've enjoyed the opportunity to see this spectacular campus and attend the most beautiful Mass I have attended in years."

Over the course of the discussion, Dr. McLean asked the Justice about a wide range of topics, starting with how he would define his judicial philosophy, which he has described as "Practical Originalism." Responding that he aims to "do Originalism the way Originalism should be done by a Supreme Court justice," Justice Alito argued that the theory's practical application differs from its academic definition.

"Originalism is the idea that the Constitution has a fixed meaning; it doesn't change. It means what people would have understood it to mean at the time it was written," Justice Alito observed. "Applying Originalism as a justice, however, means you take into account some practical realities," such as *stare decisis*, or the power of precedent. "If you are a strict academic originalist, you don't have to worry about precedent. You might consider it prudent to go back and reconsider past cases. But this is not practical for a Supreme Court justice," he continued, adding that he "almost always follow[s] past decisions."

Although the discussion did not touch upon many individual Supreme Court

cases, Justice Alito offered his insight on the Court's decision in *Obergefell v. Hodges* (2015), which invoked the 14th Amendment to assert a constitutional right to

"An institution like this teaches students to think. ... It is consistent with the best of our civilization, the marriage of Athens and Jerusalem."

same-sex marriage. "Liberty has meant a lot of different things to people throughout the ages; it is a very capacious term," he remarked. "Whatever liberty means, though, in 1868 it did not mean the right to enter into a same-sex marriage. ... Whatever you think about this, it's not there in the 14th Amendment."

Obergefell, he maintained, not only runs afoul of good jurisprudence, it establishes legal and cultural precedents that impinge on religious liberty. "That is what is happening. What we are seeing is that saying,

'I cling to traditional values on marriage' is not something you can say anymore."

Such intolerance is part of a growing trend of cultural hostility toward Christianity and its adherents, the Justice lamented. "There is a real movement to suppress the expression of anything that opposes the secular orthodoxy," connected to a latent anti-Catholicism that has resurfaced at times throughout American history: "The charge against Catholics from the beginning is that Catholics have rigid beliefs and are controlled by the Pope, that they're going to do what the Pope says instead of what's right for the country." This hostility grows greater as the country becomes increasingly secularized. "If the society doesn't respect religion," Justice Alito explained, "religious liberty becomes imperiled."

Pride, he noted, is a constant danger for jurists, who sit on a tall bench, and who are accustomed to being called "your honor" and seeing people rise whenever they enter a room. "There's a tremendous temptation to think you're really a big deal and look down on other people," he warned. Yet the Faith is a constant reminder that "we're all made in the image and likeness of God and equal in the way that matters most."

At the end of the conversation, Justice Alito shared his impressions of Thomas Aquinas College, revisiting some of the themes from his keynote address the night before. "An institution like this teaches students to think," the Justice averred, suggesting that the College's academic program prepares graduates well for legal careers. He also reiterated his admiration for TAC's founders.

"It was really a bold move, and something that went against the cultural winds and the cultural tide, to found this college in the early 1970s," Justice Alito said. "But it is consistent with the best of our civilization, the marriage of Athens and Jerusalem." ❖



President Michael F. McLean and U.S. Supreme Court Justice Samuel A. Alito address students at a TAC Town Hall in St. Cecilia Hall on the California campus.

“These Past 50 Years of Grace”

Archbishop Gomez’s Homily from TAC’s 50th Anniversary Mass

by the Most Rev. José Gomez

I am honored to celebrate this Holy Eucharist with you today. Thomas Aquinas College is a great gift to the family of God here in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. We thank God today for His many graces and blessings during these past 50 years. We ask His continued blessings upon all your benefactors, faculty,

and staff, all the students and families down through the years, and everyone who has helped to build up this fine school.

In this moment in our society and culture, I think we can all see very clearly the essential need for higher education that is truly and distinctly Catholic.

As we are aware, our society is aggressively secular and, sadly, it is becoming more hostile toward the Church and Christian viewpoints. And I would say that at the heart of the many challenges we face in this culture is the question from the Psalms, “What is man that You are mindful of him?” (Ps. 8:4)

In our Catholic tradition, we hold the answer to that question. St. Thomas Aquinas said: “The greatness of the human being consists in this: that it is capable of the universe” (*De Veritate*, question 1, article 2, reply to objection 4).

This is the privilege and duty of this college, founded in the name of the Angelic Doctor, to teach and proclaim this beautiful truth — the transcendent dignity of the human person, created in God’s image, called to be perfected in the image of the Father’s only son.

Now perhaps more than at any time in the last 50 years, we need to recover

the truth of the *Imago Dei*, the truth that creation and history have a divine direction and purpose. Again, to quote St. Thomas: “The ultimate end of things is to become like God” (*Summa Contra Gentiles*, Book 3:19; Catechism, 1877; Gomez, *Men of Brave Heart*, 128).

The whole of Western civilization was built on this revelation, which we can know by faith, as well as by reason.

That is why your mission continues to be so important — not only for your students, but for the whole project of building a healthy society, a culture rooted in an au-



thentic Christian humanism.

As we reflect on our mission, Our Lord is calling us in the Gospel today to a kind of evangelical humility, a humility in our service of His gospel (Mk. 9:38-48).

As we just heard, there was someone driving out demons in Jesus’ name, and the Apostle John wants to stop him. As He often does, Jesus uses this event in the life of His disciples to make a wider point about our role in His plan of salvation, in the great cause of the Kingdom of God.

“Do not prevent him,” Jesus says. “For whoever is not against us is for us.”

Basically, Jesus is telling us that there are an infinite variety of ways to serve Him.

You and I can do great things in His name; we can perform beautiful works for His Kingdom. But so can others — even if we don’t know who they are, even if they are “outside” our ministry or community, even if they are doing things their own way.

Our Lord’s ways are not our ways. We do not know what seeds of truth He has sown in the hearts of others. And we never know how He wants to act and work in other people’s lives.

So, when we see others doing good things, we should not be jealous or resentful. We shouldn’t be worrying about protecting our “turf.”

That is the message we heard also in our first reading from the history of the Israelites in the Book of Numbers.

My brothers and sisters, Our Lord is giving us good advice today. We don’t want to put out the Spirit by our pride or by wanting to be in control (1 Thess. 5:8). We need to learn to rejoice when we see others serving God.

And He is also reminding us that our conversion is ongoing. The work of reforming our hearts, rooting out selfishness and sin, is the work of our lifetime.

St. Josemaría Escrivá said that sometimes it is our poor heart that scandalizes us. And of course, we all know that our hearts are not large enough, or generous enough, or pure enough, for the love that God is asking from us (*The Way*, 163).

The only thing we can do is give our

hearts to Jesus, uniting our poor hearts with His, which is rich in mercy.

St. Josemaría said, “A Christian who lives united to Christ’s heart can have no goals but these: peace in society, peace in the Church, peace in his soul, the peace of God, which will reach its climax when His kingdom comes” (*Christ is Passing By*, 170).

My brothers and sisters, Jesus needs every one of us, and He gives each of us the gifts and graces that we need to serve Him.

So, today let us ask for that grace to purify our hearts, to increase our capacity to love. Let us ask for that grace to desire only

“In this moment in our society and culture, I think we can all see very clearly the essential need for higher education that is truly and distinctly Catholic.”

to be where God wants me to be; only to be doing what God wants me to be doing.

As we celebrate these past 50 years of grace, let us dedicate ourselves again to this beautiful mission of teaching the Word of truth and building the Kingdom.

Our Lord wants from us an abundant harvest, a thousand flowers blooming to the glory of God, all growing from a soil that is true and rich.

Let us entrust it all to Our Lady, Queen of the Angels, Seat of Wisdom. May she guide us to always follow her son and serve Him in purity and humility. ❖

Archbishop Gomez was the principal celebrant at Thomas Aquinas College’s 50th Anniversary Mass of Thanksgiving, offered on September 26, 2021, in Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel.



One Program Two Coasts

RECENT EVENTS AND HAPPENINGS

College Announces 2022 Commencement Speakers

Three years ago, Thomas Aquinas College launched its New England campus in Northfield, Massachusetts, with both a new class of freshmen and a class of sophomore pioneers transplanted from California. This spring, just one week after the College hosts its 45th Commencement exercises in California, it will hold its first-ever New England Commencement for those first students who made the trip eastward — the Class of 2022. And to help mark the occasion, it will welcome distinguished speakers on both coasts.

Serving as the Commencement Speaker at the California Commencement on May 14 will be Carl A. Anderson, the recently retired Supreme Knight of the Knights of Columbus, the world's largest Catholic fraternal service organization. An attorney by training, Mr. Anderson earned degrees in philosophy from Seattle University and law from the University of Denver. After working for four years in the Reagan Administration, he served for nearly a decade as a member of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. He also taught law at the Pontifical John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family, of which he was founding vice president and first dean.

One week later, on May 21, the College will welcome as its first New England Commencement Speaker the Most Rev. Robert Joseph McManus, S.T.D., bishop of the neighboring Diocese of Worcester. Ordained to the priesthood for the Diocese of Providence in 1978, Bishop McManus holds bachelor's and master's degrees from The Catholic University of America, a master of divinity degree from the Toronto School of Theology, and licentiate and doctoral degrees in sacred theology from Rome's Pontifical Gregorian University. Pope St. John Paul II named him Auxiliary Bishop of Providence in 1998 and the fifth Bishop of Worcester in 2004. In 2008, His Excellency completed his term as Chairperson of the Committee on Education for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

"We are very honored that two such faithful servants of the Church will help us celebrate our graduates' achievements in this, our 50th Anniversary year," says President Michael F. McLean. "We are grateful to Mr. Anderson and Bishop McManus for their generosity and for the inspiration that their words will no doubt provide to the Class of 2022." ❖



Carl A. Anderson



Most Rev. Robert Joseph McManus

TAC to Host Academic Conferences on Both Coasts this Summer

Set just one week yet 3,000 miles apart, Thomas Aquinas College will host two academic conferences this summer on matters Thomistic and theological.

The first-ever Thomistic Summer Conference, with the theme "Faith & Reason," will be held on the campus of Thomas Aquinas College, California, on the weekend of June 16-19. Participants will consider the essential harmony between faith and reason in light of the thought of St. Thomas. Featured speakers include Rev. Michael S. Sherwin, O.P. (University of Fribourg, Switzerland), Dr. John O'Callaghan (Jacques Maritain Center, University of Notre Dame), Dr. Steven A. Long (Ave Maria University) and Dr. Michael A. Augros (Thomas Aquinas College, New England). For more information, see thomasaquinas.edu/tsc.

The following weekend, Thomas Aquinas College and the Sacra Doctrina Project will co-host a second conference, "Grace and Sanctification: Divine Causality, Human Action, and Supernatural Glory." The conference will take place on the New England campus in Northfield, Massachusetts, from June 23 to 25. Having just presented at the California conference, Ave Maria's Dr. Steven A. Long will serve as the keynote speaker, along with Rev. Thomas Joseph White, O.P., rector at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas (Angelicum) in Rome. Serving as plenary speakers will be Dr. Daria Spezzano of Providence College and TAC-New England's own Dr. Patrick Gardner. To learn more, see sacra-doctrinaproject.org/conference. ❖



Bicoastal Witness — Students March for Life in Washington and San Francisco

The students of Thomas Aquinas College have made the annual 375-mile trek to San Francisco to join the Walk for Life West Coast ever since the event's founding in 2005. With the addition of the New England campus in 2019, this tradition of witness has become bicoastal, with East Coast students traveling 400 miles for the March for Life in the nation's capital. Although the Covid pandemic precluded students from participating in 2021, they were back in full force at both events this January, praying, singing, and calling for an end to abortion alongside thousands of fellow Americans.

On the evening of Thursday, January 20, every available student on the Northfield, Massachusetts, campus boarded several coach buses to embark on the 400-mile, seven-hour journey to Washington, D.C., arriving early Friday morning. "I think it is important for all of us to be here and celebrate the gift of life," freshman Sam Peterson told a reporter from *The Daily Guide*. "I think it is also a joy to see so many young people all here for one common goal and

be on the same page."

The next day, their California counterparts boarded buses of their own, arriving late that night in San Francisco for the next morning's peaceful protest. At the request of Walk for Life organizers, they once again took on volunteer positions, directing traffic and crowds, and the College's women helped to lead the parade, bringing considerable energy and spirit to the effort. "We walked through the streets holding our signs and making friendly eye contact with the residents," Maggie LaFond ('24) told the *National Catholic Register*. "Not only were we well received, but I'd say it was a life-changing experience."

"I think these students are heroes," said Rev. Greg Markey, head chaplain on the New England campus. "They sacrificed their sleep for two nights and they were in the cold the entire time. They are all contributing to the culture of life, because times do not change if people are not willing to make sacrifices." ❖



Boston Catholic Schools Recruit TAC Teachers

“You’re learning about your faith, you’re learning to think, you’re learning to interact and to become passionate about the intellectual life,” Thomas W. Carroll,



the superintendent of Catholic schools for the Archdiocese of Boston, told students at Thomas Aquinas College, New England, in November. “That will prepare you for any number of careers, particularly the ones I’m pitching to you today.”

Mr. Carroll offered advice to students who are interested in pursuing a career in teaching, while also seeking to recruit some of them to work for the Archdiocese. “I tell people that if I were to do my life over again, this is the school I would try to get into,” he said. Catholic schools, particularly those within the Archdiocese of Boston, need TAC students to share their gifts as teachers.

Buoyed by his success in Massachusetts, Mr. Carroll took a second recruiting trip, this time to the California campus, in Jan-

uary. “I need talented principals and they, in turn, need talented teachers,” he told a large group of students who came to his Wednesday-evening presentation in St. Cecilia Hall’s Dillon Seminar Room. “You’re earnest, well-prepared, and serious about intellectual curiosity. I would be confident in hiring every Thomas Aquinas College graduate that applied.” ❖

Updates to Our Mother of Perpetual Help Chapel

After the installation of four saintly statues and completion of the sanctuary in Our Mother of Perpetual Help Chapel last May, minor renovations continued throughout the 2021 fall semester. By the time students departed the New England campus for Christmas vacation, they could see the fruits of behind-the-scenes work in the sacristies, as well as the completion of the Chapel’s shrine to Our Mother Perpetual Help and new ornamentation in the building’s ceiling.

The newly reconstructed chaplain’s sacristy has been furnished with elegant cabinets and drawers designed to match the Chapel’s altar rails. These cabinets were specifically



constructed to include spacious closets for hanging long copes, albs, and gothic chasubles, as well as drawers to lay out the chaplains’ roman chasubles. The acolytes’ sacristy sits to the right of the high altar, accoutered with the same style cabinets and complete with a walk-in closet holding the altar servers’ cassocks and surplices.

The work on the sacristy is part of a three-year project to transform the erstwhile Sage Chapel — built more than 100 years ago on the campus of what was then a Protestant boarding school — for Catholic worship. Among the other recent renovations was the installation of a side shrine to the Chapel’s patroness, Our Mother of Perpetual Help, a replica of whose miraculous icon has hung for the last two years just outside the Chapel’s sanctuary.

Meanwhile, scaffolding has returned

once more to the Chapel nave, as painters bedeck the Chapel’s ceiling with a resplendent azure blue coat complemented by detailed stencils. “We have plenty of work left,” said Fr. Markey. “But everything is in place to be completed before the dedication of the Chapel in March.” ❖

Holy See Official Speaks to Students

In late October a member of the Holy See’s Permanent Observer Mission to the United Nations in New York, Rev. Roger J. Landry, shared with the students of Thomas Aquinas College, New England, about how he helps carry out the Church’s mission at the United Nations.

Fr. Landry’s talk, “Catholic Social Teaching in Action: The Work of the Holy See at the United Nations,” examined how the



Holy See applies Catholic social teaching in diplomatic affairs, particularly at the U.N. An attaché and the director of special events at the Holy See’s Permanent Observer Mission, as well as a priest of the Diocese of Fall

River, Massachusetts, Fr. Landry discussed the rich history of the Holy See and its importance on the global stage. “There is

a distinction between what we owe to the civil order and what we owe to God,” he said. “We are made in the image of God, so we owe Him everything. But, Jesus permits, clearly, there is a distinct order at the service of people that the Church is supposed to help.”

Over the course of his talk, Fr. Landry addressed the nature of the Holy See’s mission at the U.N. “We are not concerned with what most states are concerned with,” he said. “Our goal is to articulate the ethical principles that should govern the way we relate to each other as individuals, as groups, and as nations.” ❖

New Firefighting Helispot

A newly installed helispot on the California campus got its first use in December as the Ventura County Fire Department (VCFD) trained a crew in advanced firefighting techniques using one of its recently purchased Sikorsky Firehawk helicopters.

“The new helispot at Thomas Aquinas College — less than a mile from where the 2017 Thomas Fire started — greatly aids our firefighting abilities in the Santa Paula area,” said Fire Chief Mark Lorenzen. “We no longer need to fly our helicopters to Fillmore to fill water tanks. That means we can put more water on a fire while it’s

small, giving it less time to spread.”

For more than 40 years, the VCFD landed its Vietnam-era “Huey” helicopters on Thomas Aquinas College’s athletic fields, an option which would not work for the much larger and heavier Firehawks. After considering various possibilities, county and College officials opted to install a concrete helispot, designed to accommo-



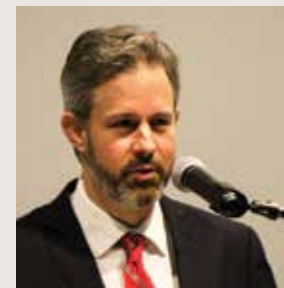
date the needs of a Firehawk helicopter and its crew, on the southeastern corner of the College’s Santa Paula campus.

“We have been honored to work with VCFD ever since the College first came to Santa Paula in 1978, and we remember well the department’s heroic efforts during the Thomas Fire,” said Vice President for Operations Mark Kretschmer. “We are delighted that, after assisting with Ventura County’s search-and-rescue operations for all these years, we can now contribute to its firefighting efforts as well.” ❖

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL Lecture and Concert Series Highlights from Last Semester*

Endowed by Barbara and Paul Henkels

NEW ENGLAND



Opening Lecture
Dr. Patrick Gardner
Tutor, Thomas Aquinas College
The Development of Christian Doctrine and Catholic Liberal Education

Fall Concert

Ashuelot Concerts
Schubert, Beethoven, and Brahms

September Lecture

Dr. Mary Mumbach
Professor of Literature, Magdalen College of the Liberal Arts
Flannery O’Connor: Hillbilly Thomist

October Lecture

Dr. Lawrence Feingold
Associate Professor of Theology & Philosophy, Kenrick-Glennon Seminary, St. Louis
Aquinas on Predestination and the Distinction between Operative and Cooperative Grace

Fall All-College Seminar

Murder in the Cathedral by T.S. Eliot



November Lecture
Dr. Glenn C. Arbery
President, Wyoming Catholic College
The Mantle of Eumaios

CALIFORNIA

Opening Lecture

Dr. Gregory L. Froelich
Tutor, Thomas Aquinas College
Science and Freedom



Fall Concert

Larissa Fedoryka, cellist
Bach, Saint-Saëns, Shostakovich, Dvořák, Bruch, Massenet, and Elgar

Fall All-College Seminar #1

Murder in the Cathedral by T.S. Eliot

October Lecture

Dr. Elizabeth Reyes
Tutor, Thomas Aquinas College
Toads and Flamingos: Longing, Lamentation, and Love in Lyric Poetry




November Lecture

Dr. Michael Waldstein (’77)
Professor of Theology, Franciscan University of Steubenville
God is One but not Alone: The Trinity in the Gospel of John

Fall All-College Seminar #2

A Midsummer Night’s Dream by William Shakespeare

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

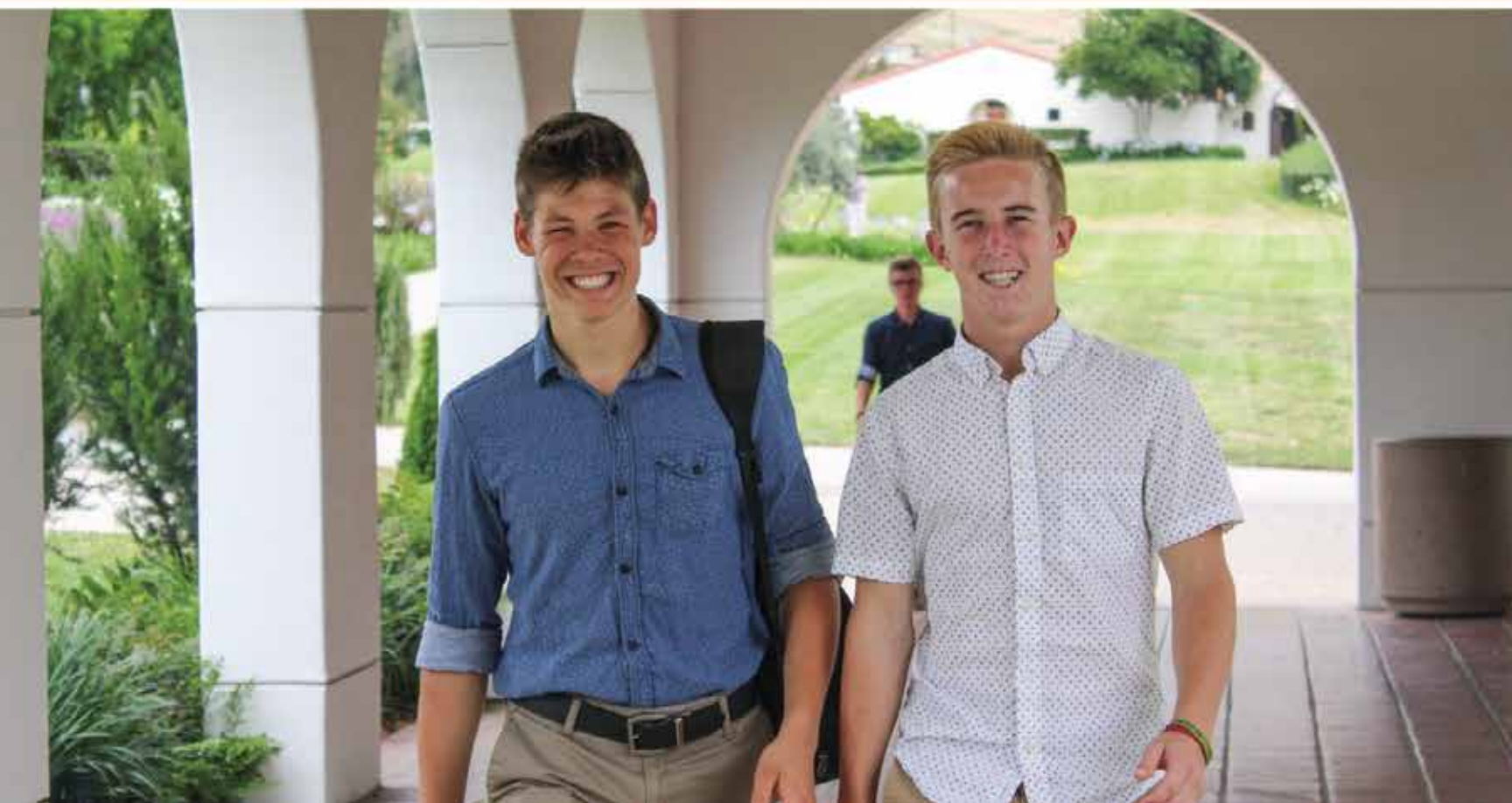
High School Great Books Program

AT THOMAS AQUINAS COLLEGE

California: July 10-23, 2022

New England: July 24-August 6, 2022

Ask the big questions and explore the answers, forging new friendships to last a lifetime



SENIOR REFLECTIONS

A Process of Discovery

By Dominic Gardner ('22)

Scranton, Pennsylvania



My parents are both Thomas Aquinas College alumni, so from an early age coming to school here was, for me, a possible or even likely outcome.

As I entered high school, though, I wondered whether my interests were really aligned with the curriculum at TAC. I had some vague idea of “liberal arts” being like the English courses I was taking, with lots of literature and writing. While I didn’t dislike these classes, I enjoyed math and science more for their rigor and unambiguous answers. My idea of liberal arts was of something subjective and confused.

But when I visited the College during my junior year of high school, I found it was just the opposite. The intellectual life here was rigorous, precise, and concerned with the most serious questions. So while I applied to other schools just in case, my mind was really made up to come to TAC.

Since being a student here, I have found the studies even more rewarding than my first impression. It’s amazing to see the development of ideas over the course of a semester or

shortcut provided by math textbooks, but discovering its origins made it seem so much more real and wonderful.

The second effect of discovery is to make the subject material more lasting in the student’s mind. I remember math now far better than I remembered it in high school because everything is part of a whole, connected system rather than scattered rules. It makes what you learn an object of knowledge and not simply memory.

Third, and perhaps most important, the method of discovery really shows that the intellectual life is not simply a destination, but a journey, a lifelong quest to exercise your highest faculty in pursuit of the highest things. I remember how satisfied I was at the end of freshman year, how much I thought I had learned. Now I see how far I have come since then, while still seeing how much more there is to learn.

Yet Thomas Aquinas College is not merely concerned with our minds but with our whole person. The community fostered by the College encourages students to pursue the good. I was homeschooled, so leaving home was always going to be a bit of a culture shock, but TAC provides a fantastic middle ground where you are independent and responsible for yourself while also surrounded with good, like-minded peers, provided with healthy recreations, and encouraged in the spiritual and intellectual life. The rules here, then, like any moral precept, make you more free rather than less.

I expect the benefits TAC has provided me to continue and grow when I leave campus. I am interested in pursuing a career in law, and scored in the 97th percentile on the LSAT. (Honestly, that test is made for TAC students — it’s not based on needing knowledge of specific material but simply being able to think logically and read critically.) I am confident the skills gained here will serve me well both in law school and also in a career that follows. ❖

I see how far I have come ... while still seeing how much more there is to learn.

even over all four years. Just last Thursday we were using conclusions reached in Freshman Mathematics to make arguments in Senior Philosophy.

This feature of the curriculum is perhaps the most valued part of my studies here. It is especially well served by our classroom discussions and might be called the process of discovery. Presenting education as discovery rather than mere passive receptivity has had, for me, three main effects.

First, it helps bring the joy and wonder that true knowledge ought to bring. In one of our early Junior Mathematics readings, Descartes writes that he leaves out some of the steps because he doesn’t want to deprive us of the joy of discovery. And while this omission makes for more work, he is absolutely right. I remember working on a complicated and seemingly abstract proposition in his geometry when I suddenly realized he was producing the quadratic formula. I was completely amazed and excited! I had thought of the quadratic formula as merely a

Not Just Smarter, but Better

By Greta VanDamme ('22)

San Juan Capistrano, California



When I was 15, I dropped out of high school. I know that doesn't sound very good, but it was the first of a few decisions that led me to Thomas Aquinas College, so I am very glad that I did it.

At my high school I was given massive amounts of information that wasn't presented in a useful or an interesting way, told not to ask questions, asked to blindly memorize things that I didn't understand, and given hours and hours of busy-work, every day. My mother was just as distressed by this situation as I was, and so with her support, I quit.

I got a job, and I started going to community college just to pass the time until I could find a college where I could continue my education in a meaningful way. My older sister, my mother, and I started looking around, and we settled on a Great Books program, then narrowed it down to TAC and St. John's College.

"I have read so many of the most influential thinkers of all time and, even more important, I have seen in the world around me the truth that they saw first."

I didn't love the idea of coming here: I'm not Catholic, my family isn't Catholic, and I thought at the College I would find people who were biased, that they would warp texts to fit their own opinions, and who wouldn't have a real respect for the authors. On top of all that, my sister chose TAC. I had to assert my independence, so I chose St. John's.

Luckily, a few days before I sent in my commitment letter, my sister and some of her friends came home for a visit, and they spent all weekend trying to convince me to come to TAC. I spent all weekend trying to convince myself that I didn't want to, but a few days after they left I was sitting with my grandma, and before I really knew what I was saying, I said, "I'm going to TAC." I felt like such a weight had been lifted off my shoulders.

I am now nearly at the end of my time here, and I can say with complete certainty that it has been the kind of education that I wanted it to be.

I have read so many of the most influential thinkers of all time

and, even more important, I have seen in the world around me the truth that they saw first. I was wrong to worry that people here would try to warp the Great Books to support their preconceived opinions. Instead, I found the kind of intellectual humility and reverence for the authors that I had sought. I have also cultivated good study habits; I use very little technology; my attention span is much longer than it was when I first got here. I can think in a more profound, a more thorough, and a more precise way.

Beyond this intellectual formation, however, TAC has also formed me morally, which I never asked it to do.

One of the essays you have to write when you apply to the College is about the rules here, the Rules of Residence, which are pretty strict: We have a dress code and a curfew and rules against TV and technology. I think my essay sounded something like this: "I don't understand the rules, I don't like them, but I'll follow them — I guess — if you make me."

I am now the women's head prefect; I enforce those rules every day. I won't say I love all of them, but I do love most of them. And I have seen how instrumental they were in making me the kind of person who could pursue the things that we want to pursue here. I got used to putting the good things first; to reading instead of watching TV, to getting a good night's sleep so that I could be sharp for class the next morning.

Before I came here, I didn't really see the connection between knowledge and goodness and happiness. I wanted to be educated, but I don't think I could have told you why. I knew it was important, but now I really know why I wanted that. The things I have read here, and the kind of life I have lived here, haven't just made me smarter, they have made me happy.

I came to TAC hoping to be made well-read. I am well-read now, but I am also wise and good, and I got so much more than I asked for in that. ❖

New Faces

College Welcomes New Tutors & Chaplains on Both Coasts



Mr. James Berquist ('08)

At TAC you get to teach within the context of this wonderful curriculum," marvels Mr. James Berquist ('08), a recent addition to the California teaching faculty. "You have people being given the tools to read and to seek out the truth with real guidance. There's really nothing like it."

As an alumnus, Mr. Berquist is now immersing himself for a second time in a program crafted in part by his own father, Marcus R. Berquist, one of the College's founders. "Something really unique and wonderful from my childhood is that my parents manifested and modeled for us, in their lives, that there is absolutely no conflict in the relationship between faith and reason," he reminisces. "My father, in particular, enabled me to see how 'faith seeking understanding' is the principle behind the most proper pursuit of wisdom."

An abiding appreciation for the value of Catholic liberal education permeated the Berquist home. Mr. Berquist's mother, Laura (Steichen '75), is a graduate of the College's first class and the founder of Mother of Divine Grace School, a classi-

cal distance-learning program.

In high school, James was interested in pursuing further education in the liberal arts, but he was also a serious athlete, and thus considered enrolling at a school with an intercollegiate sports program. When he attended Thomas Aquinas College's High School Summer Program, however, he determined that he wanted to spend the next four years discussing the Great Books in the company of friends.

After graduating from the College, Mr. Berquist pursued graduate studies at the University of Dallas. "I went there because I wanted to keep up that kind of interdisciplinary approach, because wisdom is not contained in one discipline," he explains. "I was very happy with the program because I found that the people there came to classes for the same reason that they do at TAC, namely, to come to the common good of truth."

Mr. Berquist then spent the next several years close to home in Southern California with his wife, Lisa, and their young daughter. Before joining the TAC faculty, he taught at Ventura College and online for Texas A&M University. Now he returns to a place he knows and loves. "What's so amazing at TAC is having people developing the capacity to investigate the truth in a worthwhile and productive way," he avers. "It's something that I'll never take for granted." ❖

Rev. Carlos Viego

To accommodate the continued growth of its East Coast campus, last fall Thomas Aquinas College appointed a second chaplain for New England: Rev. Carlos Viego, a priest of the Archdiocese of Newark, New Jersey.

"I accepted the chaplaincy at Thomas Aquinas College, New England, because the Catholic cultural mission of the College is also my own," says Fr. Viego. "True education, culture, and civilization have their source and perfection in the Person of Christ, the Incarnate Word of God, and in the historical reality of our Catholic culture."

Although born in Schenectady, New York, Fr. Viego spent most of his childhood in Wilmington, North Carolina. "I



came from a very Catholic, Cuban-American family that drilled the Faith into me," he says. "However, I was a wayward youth and very rebellious." When he was 18, he spent a week at a Trappist Monastery in South Carolina. "That was where I sensed the call to priesthood," he remembers. "I began going to daily Mass and praying daily Rosaries, and haven't stopped since."

To pursue his vocation, Fr. Viego attended St. Andrew's College Seminary in New Jersey. He then graduated from Seton Hall University and entered Mount St. Mary's Seminary in Maryland. Ordained

“Thomas Aquinas College is a very rare place where truth, goodness, and beauty easily lead one to seek a life of holiness.” — Rev. John Mary Chung

to the priesthood in 1998, he holds a licentiate in philosophy from The Catholic University of America and a doctorate in philosophy from the Holy Cross Pontifical University in Rome. Between 1998 and 2020 he served as a parochial vicar at six New Jersey parishes.

While at Mount St. Mary’s, Fr. Viego became friends with a fellow seminarian, Rev. Greg Markey, now the head chaplain of the New England campus. Indeed, it was Fr. Markey who recommended him for the TAC chaplaincy. “Fr. Viego always has a lively intellect — he is always reading the Great Books — so I knew he would enjoy the intellectual atmosphere here.”

When not serving the sacramental life of the College, Fr. Viego can be found engaging students in countless ways, whether in fervent theological discussions, competitive games of pool, or leading Compline. With his expansive proficiency in languages — Italian, French, and German, as well as Croatian, Polish, Russian, Arabic, Hebrew, and Latin — he is a regular participant at the foreign-language lunch tables in Gould Hall.

“We are very blessed to have Fr. Viego join our community. His love for the liturgy and his experience with spiritual direction are greatly appreciated,” says Dr. Thomas J. Kaiser, dean of the New England campus. “We thank Cardinal Tobin and the Archdiocese of Newark for his service.” ❖

Rev. John Mary Chung



A priest of the Archdiocese of San Francisco, Rev. John Mary Chung joins Head Chaplain Rev. Paul Raftery, O.P., and Rev. Robert Marczewski in the California chaplaincy. He succeeds



Rev. Cornelius M. Buckley, S.J., who, after 17 years at the College, departed last fall for the Sacred Heart Jesuit Center in Los Gatos, California.

“Thomas Aquinas College is a very rare place where truth, goodness, and beauty easily lead one to seek a life of holiness,” he says. “My hope is that, through the sacraments, preaching, and individual spiritual direction, I can help the community grow in virtue and have an even deeper communion with Christ and the Blessed Virgin Mary.”

Fr. Chung was born in 1962 and grew up in a close-knit family of five children in South Korea. From 1981 to 1986 he attended Seoul National University, where he received bachelor’s and master’s degrees in English education and English, respectively. In 1986 he was baptized into the Catholic faith at the Cathedral of the Archdiocese of Seoul.

Around that time he obtained an instructor’s position at Korea National Open University, where for the next four years he taught various courses in English. To continue his studies, he came to the United States in 1991 and earned a master’s and a doctorate in linguistics at

the University of California, Berkeley.

From 1998 to 2006 Fr. Chung chaired the Korean program at Smith College, where he taught Korean language, culture, and literature. While at Smith, he discerned a vocation to the priesthood. In 2006 he entered the Pope St. John XXIII National Seminary in Weston, Massachusetts, and in 2011 he was ordained to the sacred priesthood of Jesus Christ.

Fr. Chung served as an associate pastor at Nativity Parish in Menlo Park from 2011-2014, at St. Elizabeth Parish from 2014-2017, and at Star of the Sea Parish in San Francisco from 2017-2019. He also served as pastor at St. Philip’s in San Francisco from 2019-2020, then enjoyed a one-year sabbatical before coming to the College last fall.

“We are grateful to our old friend Archbishop Cordileone for blessing Thomas Aquinas College with the ministry of Fr. Chung, who has shown great concern for the spiritual well-being of our students,” says Dr. John J. Goyette, dean of Thomas Aquinas College, California. “We are very glad to welcome him here.” ❖

Dr. Taylor O’Neill



Although he received a strong Catholic formation from his parents, by the time he was in high school, Dr. Taylor O’Neill was no longer a practicing Catholic. By God’s grace, however, a literature teacher brought him back to the Faith — by introducing him to the Great Books.

“He essentially taught us the Catholic faith through great works of literature, and he would work in Plato and Aristotle,” recalls Dr. O’Neill, the newest tutor on the New England campus. The experience ignited his curiosity for learning. “I knew that I wanted to study philosophy or theology after that, and my spiritual journey was molded by the liberal arts.”

Upon graduating from the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, Dr. O’Neill enrolled in graduate school at The Catholic University of America. It was during this time that he met his future wife, Eliza-



beth, through a Catholic group in Washington, D.C., where she was working as a chemist. The couple married a short time after in 2011, and are today the parents of six children.

After completing his master’s degree in historical and systematic theology at CUA, Dr. O’Neill earned a doctorate in theology at Ave Maria University in Florida. From there, he and his family moved to Cedar Rapids, Iowa, where he spent the next four years as a professor of theology at Mount Mercy University.

Having joined the Thomas Aquinas College teaching faculty last fall, he is now delighted to teach from the same

“I don’t know of anywhere else in the world that is going to give students the opportunity, the space, and the guidance to spend four years thinking and contemplating the highest things in life.” — Dr. Taylor O’Neill

Great Books that proved so instrumental in his own formation. “I don’t know of anywhere else in the world that is going to give students the opportunity, the space, and the guidance to spend four years thinking and contemplating the highest things in life,” he says. “Every student here is so invested to contemplate the highest things for the sake of

themselves and others.”

He also appreciates the opportunity to teach across the disciplines in the College’s integrated curriculum. In his first year, for example, Dr. O’Neill’s workload consists of Freshman Language (Latin), Sophomore Theology, and Sophomore Seminar. “When you are teaching all areas,” he notes, “your intellect doesn’t become stale.”

Moreover, the northeastern climate suits him well. “The East Coast experiences all four seasons, and pairing that with the TAC curriculum, it made so much sense for my family and me to come to Northfield,” he says. “This is where I’m meant to be.” ❖

Dr. Joseph Zepeda (’04)



The son of two Thomas Aquinas College graduates, new California tutor Dr. Joseph Zepeda (’04) credits his parents with instilling in him and his 12 siblings a love of reading, learning, and the Faith. “They taught us that learning is worth it for its own sake,” he remarks. They also modeled the importance of being countercultural — “not just following whatever happens to be

going on in the society around you.”

In high school, “largely through family influences,” he started thinking seriously of coming to the College himself. “It had always been a part of my life, and it became the

option for me. I loved it.” The curriculum at TAC exposed him to

great thinkers whose works profoundly influenced him, especially St. Augustine and the authors read in Junior and Senior Mathematics and Natural Science. “Those tutorials made me want to think more deeply about the questions that arose in those classes,” he says.

The example of his tutors, meanwhile, led him to consider a career in educa-

tion. “It was influential to see how seriously they cared for their students and how interested they were in their good,” he observes. “It was inspiring.”

After graduating from the College in 2004, Dr. Zepeda enrolled at the University of Notre Dame, where he earned a master’s degree and a doctorate in the history and philosophy of science. From there he went on to teach for 12 years in the Integral Program of Liberal Arts at St. Mary’s College of California, the alma mater of several of the College’s founders and early tutors. “In a way,” he reflects, “it was like going back to a piece of the College’s history.”

Back once more at his own alma mater, Dr. Zepeda loves his role as a tutor. “TAC stands out in a lot of ways; the students are bright and committed, and the tutors are really alive intellectually,” he says. “The College is committed to its



mission, and that translates into the tutors getting to spend their time on what’s really important. It’s the pearl of great price. It’s certainly not something you will find everywhere.”

Dr. Zepeda and his wife, Julie (Shields ’04), are the parents of eight children. “The oldest is 16, and the youngest 2 — life is full,” he says. He loves the outdoors, plays the piano, and cantors at the Mission Basilica San Buenaventura. ❖

Faith in Action

News from TAC's Alumni Blog

Maggie McCann ('13)

An MD-PhD candidate at Creighton University, Maggie McCann ('13) recently completed a prestigious two-year fellowship with the Paul Ramsey Institute, which trains young leaders from a wide range of disciplines in a morally grounded approach to bioethics. She has also completed the first part of her dissertation in collaboration with Stanford University, focusing on spinal cord injury.



After graduating from Thomas Aquinas College in 2013, Miss McCann spent a year in veterinary school at Purdue University before deciding to pursue human medicine. As an NIH T35 fellow at Stanford, she then studied molecular and cancer biology before finding her true passion: neuroscience. She was the first student in Stanford's newly minted Masters in Laboratory Animal Science program.

"The education I received from TAC prepared me well for a career in science," she reflects. "The program teaches one to think analytically, which is what scientists spend most of their time doing. Additionally, the integrated nature of TAC's curriculum enriched my education and helped me appreciate how philosophy and science reciprocate."

Next up, she looks forward to starting the second part of her dissertation, studying molecular markers of peripheral nerve injury in collaboration with Barrow Neurological Institute. ❖



Brian Schardt ('16)

Since graduating from Thomas Aquinas College just five years ago, Brian Schardt ('16) has had a whirlwind career in the high-tech sector, working for several major American corporations, including Walmart Labs, PwC, and Warner Music Group. But in 2020 he set off on his most ambitious venture yet, launching his own company, Iris, for which he serves as the chief executive and technical officer.

"I saw an opportunity in the marketplace to share real-time investments with friends and family," Mr. Schardt reflects. "I was making trades, and my friends and family wanted to know about

them in real time. So I set out to develop an app that integrates with stockbroker accounts."

Iris' principal product is a stock-trading social-media platform, connecting investors the world over. Despite minimal marketing — the company has thus far focused its efforts on refining the product and user experience — Iris has generated enough organic interest to attract more than 50,000 active users who have posted more than \$3 billion in stock transactions. "Right now we're the only app to integrate with Robinhood, one of the top brokers for millennials," says Mr. Schardt. "We're also adding a group-messaging platform that will really lend itself to the stock market. Once it's in place, we don't think anyone will want to be anywhere else."

"Iris is about breaking the common mentality that the retail trader cannot be as good as Wall Street," says Mr. Schardt. "Iris is showing that we can break this illusion, and that the retail trader can outperform Wall Street." ❖

Mother Madeleine Marie of St. Joseph (Mary Kay Ellis '99)

Some 21 years after her graduation — and 16 after she left the United States to enter the religious life in Italy — Mother Madeleine Marie of St. Joseph (Mary Kay Ellis '99) returned to the California campus last summer.

As superior of the Sister Adorers of the Royal Heart of Jesus Christ Sovereign Priest, Mother Madeleine Marie travels the world to oversee the Sisters' eight houses in five countries. Yet what brought her to California was an invitation to speak at the Ventura / North Los Angeles chapter of Legatus, the international organization of Catholic business executives. Her talk was titled, "The State of the Church in Europe."

"I have a responsibility for the wellbeing of the community and also the wellbeing of each sister —physical health, psychological health, spiritual health, and all of that," says Mother Madeleine Marie of her growing order. Of the 57 Sister Adorers, just 25 are professed; there are also 25 novices, 7 postulants, and at least 6 more postulants expected to enter later this year. The sisters hail from 14 countries and 4 continents.

"I do my best to dispose things," she says. "Then God does everything. God does the rest." ❖



Verso L'alto Coffee Roasters

In December 2020, Samantha Flanders ('15) co-founded Verso L'alto Coffee Roasters, along with her sister and brother-in-law, Hannah (Flanders) and Johnny Richard (both '13). The company's Italian name translates to "to the heights," a beloved expression of Bl. Pier Giorgio Frassati, the roastery's patron.

A little more than one year later, the business is already a tremendous success. "In addition to a steady stream of online sales," Mrs. Richard reports, "we have participated in several local artisan markets over the summer, signed a contract to be the exclusive coffee vendor for the Catholic.store's online sales, hosted a coffee bar at the Napa Institute, as well as roasted sample gift favors for private events" — among them, Thomas Aquinas College's 50th Anniversary Gala last October.

While it was a TAC tutor who introduced them to fresh-roasted coffee, these young entrepreneurs also credit their Catholic liberal education with preparing them to share their gifts and talents in the marketplace. "The education that we received at Thomas Aquinas College has guided our entrepreneurial pursuits, not for the roasting itself, but for the way we have chosen to brand our company and for our vision for Verso L'alto Coffee Roasters," reflects Mrs. Richard. "At Thomas Aquinas College we were immersed in a culture of truth and beauty, and in the curriculum we often reflected on man's desires to seek the highest good. In addition to sharing our love of fresh-roasted coffee beans, we wish to invite our customers to seek the highest good for themselves." ❖

Dr. Peter A. Kwasniewski ('94)

While in Warsaw last November to promote the translation of his two latest books into Polish, alumnus author and scholar Dr. Peter A. Kwasniewski ('94) spoke before some of the country's top educators about, as he described it, "the immense value of classical liberal education in itself and in the modern world."

The first professor and director of admissions at Wyoming

Catholic College, Dr. Kwasniewski spoke in the main ballroom of Warsaw's Royal Castle to an audience that included Poland's Minister of Education and Science, as well as several of his deputies, various other government officials, and educators from throughout the country. He also participated in two panel discussions, both dealing with how the central European country can improve its schools and colleges through Catholic liberal education.

"A well-ordered liberal education deeply rooted in the great Western and Catholic tradition will profoundly humanize, enrich, and transfigure the inner and outer life of the student who is blessed to receive it," said Dr. Kwasniewski in his address to the Classical Education Conference. "The graduates of TAC and of similar colleges demonstrate this in unmistakable ways. Alumni have shown a remarkable ability to excel across many fields of endeavor: not only philosophy, theology, and mathematics, as one might expect, but also law, business, medicine, engineering, politics, social activism, the military, architecture, and the fine arts." ❖



79 Alumni Priests!

Giving Thanks to God for Five Recent Ordinations



Rev. David Allen ('10)

When he was five years old, Rev. David Allen ('10) and his family paid a visit to the New Camaldoli Hermitage near their home in San Luis Obispo, California. He remembers watching the monks, and one — TAC alumnus, Rev. Isaiah Teichert, O.S.B.Cam. ('78), with “his big beard and cowl” — caught the young boy’s attention. “I thought, ‘I want to be like him. I want to be a priest,’” Fr. Allen recalls. “That was the beginning right there.”

In high school Fr. Allen “fell in love with the classics,” and so found his way to Thomas Aquinas College, where he enrolled in 2006. Yet despite his longtime yearning, he was unsure that God was calling him to a priestly vocation. So he dated a fellow student, and during his junior year, as he was contemplating proposing marriage, his girlfriend pointed him to his true calling.

Having prayed that God would make his vocation clear to him — “I asked Him to do it in eight days,” he laughs at his youthful impatience — Fr. Allen was astonished when, on the eighth day, his girlfriend asked to speak to him. “It was amazing, we were studying together, and she says, ‘You know, there’s something I need to tell you,’” he remembers. “I think you’re called to the priesthood. It’s what makes you come alive. It’s just you. And so I think you need to go discern.”

A year later, after he graduated, that discernment would bring him to the Norbertine Fathers in Silverado, California, an experience he likens to “dating the ideal woman, but not falling in love with her.” Although blessed by his two years at the Abbey, it was clear that the religious life was not for him. He then worked briefly before earning a master’s degree at Austria’s International Theological Institute and entered the seminary for the Diocese of Monterey in 2017.

On June 19, 2021, the Most Rev. Daniel F. Garcia ordained him to the priesthood of Jesus Christ — “the best day of my life,” Fr. Allen recalls. The new priest now serves as parochial vicar at St. Patrick Church in Arroyo Grande. “It’s kind of a non-

stop adventure,” he says. “Miracles are happening, people’s lives are being touched, lives are being changed — and I get to have a front-row seat.” ❖

Rev. John Winkowitsch, O.P. ('04)

“After high school I went to college to study math and computer science,” recalls Rev. John Winkowitsch, O.P. ('04). “Then, like an overconfident teenager, I dropped out and started working for a startup Internet company to make millions.”

In his spare time, he started thinking about “the eternal questions, like what is the point of life, why do we exist, why are we here?” He read every relevant book he could get his hands on — and then he discovered St. Thomas Aquinas. “I was impressed with what I read, so I went to Google and typed in ‘Thomas Aquinas,’ and the College’s webpage popped up,” Fr. John remembers. “I read the founding document and thought, ‘This is amazing!’”

So he applied, was admitted, and began his freshman year one week after his 21st birthday. At that year’s Easter Vigil, he entered the Catholic Church. “Seeing the joy and the peace of Catholic family life fully lived — it was so eye-opening — and the



classes!” he says. “Those four years are a central pivot point in my life, completely changing the trajectory.”

During his senior year, Fr. John received a full scholarship and stipend to study philosophy at The Catholic University of America, where he earned a licentiate and completed his coursework for a doctorate. He then taught for four years at a Catholic high school in Maryland, before “God pulled me by the

scruff of my neck,” and revealed to him a latent desire: “I just wanted to be a priest to provide the sacraments to God’s people so He can purify His church and raise up saints.”

From there Fr. John entered the seminary for the Diocese of Madison, Wisconsin, during which time he completed his doctorate. Yet longing for the comradery of religious life, in 2016 he entered the Western Dominican Province. On June 5, 2021, he received the Sacrament of Holy Orders at the hands of the Most Rev. Salvatore J. Cordileone, Archbishop of San Francisco.

Fr. John now serves as a parochial vicar at St. Raymond’s Catholic Church in Menlo Park, California. “It’s right in the heart of Silicon Valley,” he says. “Menlo Park is where Google was founded. Facebook is right up the street, and Apple is right next door in Cupertino. We’re trying to preach the truth, preach the Gospel in the midst of all this potential. It’s a good place for us Dominicans to be.” ❖

Rev. Michael Masteller ('13)

In five decades Thomas Aquinas College has been blessed to see 79 alumni priests ordained in dioceses and orders across the United States and the world. Only this past year, however, did a graduate enter the priesthood for the College’s home diocese in California, the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. That joyful moment came on the morning of June 5, 2021, when the Most Rev. José H. Gomez ordained Rev. Michael Masteller ('13) at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels.

The son of an alumna, Katie (Blewett '82), and TAC General Counsel Quincy Masteller, young Michael always considered coming to the College, but was unsure until he attended the High School Summer Program. There, he fell in love with the College’s classical curriculum — and its culture. “It was just the people, the friendships, and the beauty of the community,” he says.

When he became a TAC student, that community would play a key role in leading him to his vocation. “It was my junior year, and some friends began doing these morning holy hours, so they invited me to join them,” he recalls. “So I started going with them, in that early-morning darkness, and that really awakened a deeper and different conversation with the Lord.”

After graduation he taught for two years in Kenosha, Wisconsin. “Even though I had a sense I had a vocation, there was a lot of fear holding me back,” he admits. Yet when he took those fears to prayer, he was given the grace to overcome them. “The Lord just lifted me out of that kind of inner darkness, and all of a sudden I was free,” he continues. “And in my first moment of freedom, I felt impelled to give my life to the Lord. It was just the natural response to what the Lord had done for me.”

A lifelong Californian, Fr. Masteller entered the seminary for the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, an experience which included crash lessons in Spanish and a summer in Mexico for cultural and linguistic immersion. That preparation has served him well, as in his first assignment Fr. Masteller is an associate pastor at



the predominantly Spanish-speaking St. Helen Catholic Church in South Gate.

“The greatest joy is being an intimate observer of what God is doing in the world,” he says of his priestly life. “Every once in a while, in a very powerful way, it moves me, that this is what God wants to do through me for the Church.” ❖

“Menlo Park is where Google was founded. Facebook is right up the street, and Apple is right next door in Cupertino. We’re trying to preach the truth, preach the Gospel in the midst of all this potential.”

— Rev. John Winkowitsch, O.P. ('04)

Rev. Peter Mary, F.S.S.R. (Arden Mills '08)

As a boy growing up in Eastern Montana, Arden Mills ('08) never gave God much thought. “My parents raised me as an atheist, as they were members of the Communist Party,” he shares. “I don’t even remember being told ‘There is no God,’ just as I was never told, ‘There is no square circle.’”

Yet young Arden — now Rev. Peter Mary, F.S.S.R. — couldn’t bring himself to believe in a purely materialistic universe. “At about 9 or 10 years of age, I can remember considering the material ‘stuff’ around me, and realizing that it can’t have made itself,” he recalls. “Therefore, there must be some sort of God Who made it all. Not precisely the Five Ways of St. Thomas — but not too far off, either!”

This curiosity, coupled with a growing awareness of man’s sinful nature, led him to a belief in Christ; and his grandmother (a Presbyterian minister) baptized him at the age of 15. For college, Fr. Peter Mary, hoping to become a missionary, wanted a school that would help him deepen his faith. He learned about



Thomas Aquinas College through an ad in *National Review*, and attended the High School Summer Program. “I found a more honest and vigorous search for truth, and a willingness to prove everything from first principles, than I found anywhere else,” Fr. Peter Mary remembers.

In 2004 he enrolled as a freshman, and soon entered the Catholic Church. “One of the best aspects of the life at the College was coming to know a group of unapologetically pious and enthusiastic Catholics,” he says. “Having become a Catholic, it was also at TAC that I heard God’s call to follow Him as a religious.”

Devoted to the Extraordinary Form of the Mass, Fr. Peter Mary next found his way to the Sons of the Most Holy Redeemer, whose motherhouse is on a small island off the north coast of Scotland. He entered the congregation in 2010 and made final vows in 2016. On September 24, 2021, the Most Rev. Robert Finn, Bishop Emeritus of Kansas City — St. Joseph, ordained him to the priesthood.

Through the remarkable workings of providence, however, Fr. Peter Mary is no longer in Scotland, but once more in Eastern Montana, where his congregation established its first American foundation in 2020. “I sometimes wonder why it is that God has brought me back to this corner of the world,” he reflects, “after going so far afield.” He also oversees his community’s material needs. “It is a full life; blessedly full,” he says. “Thanks be to God and Mary.” ❖

Rev. Ryan Truss ('16)

“When the Bishop said those words where the actual change happens, I just remember that moment being very powerful,” recalls Rev. Ryan Truss ('16) of his ordination at the hands of the Most Rev. Mitchell Rozanski, Archbishop of St. Louis, on May 28, 2021. “In the moments before, I was thinking, ‘OK, I’m a deacon, I’m a deacon, I’m a deacon’ — and then, ‘I’m a priest!’”

For Fr. Truss, ordination was the culmination of a lifelong

yearning. “I can’t remember a time when I didn’t have some idea of wanting to be a priest,” he says. “I considered entering seminary right out of high school, but really felt a draw to study the Great Books and to receive a liberal education.” So, at the suggestion of some trusted teachers and friends, he “put the seminary on hold” and attended Thomas Aquinas College first.

“I had a sense that I was called to the priesthood when I came to the College, and that continued to grow as I was there — while, at the same time it matured,” he says. “I got to see the beauty of the married vocation lived out by the tutors so faithfully. I also got a greater appreciation for the priesthood in the example of the chaplains, who gave themselves so completely to their mission and to serving at the Mass.”

In the fall of his senior year, he applied to his home diocese of St. Louis, and on Holy Thursday he received word of his admittance. “I just thought how fitting it was, Holy Thursday being the day when the priesthood was instituted at the Last Supper.” Shortly after his graduation, he entered the Archdiocese’s Kenrick-Glennon Seminary, where one of his professors was fellow alumnus Dr. John Finley ('99). Thanks to his philosophy and theology studies at the College, Fr. Truss was able to graduate in just five years. He now serves as associate pastor at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Valley Park, Missouri.

“I’ve had days where I move from one thing to another, from Anointing of the Sick to playing with the schoolkids at recess to helping a couple prepare for marriage,” he says. Through it all, the College’s academic program has prepared him in ways he never expected. “You develop the skill of being able to listen,” he notes. “That has really already benefited me when hearing confessions, being able to hear what’s on somebody’s heart and what’s at the root of what they’re saying.” ❖



Thomas Patrick Sullivan 1933-2021

In 1973, just two years after its founding, Thomas Aquinas College welcomed to its Board of Governors the first member who was not also a member of the faculty: Thomas P. Sullivan, a real-estate developer from Los Angeles. Impressed by his diligence, expertise, and leadership, Mr. Sullivan’s fellow governors elected him chairman just two years later, a position he dutifully held for 10 years. After stepping down as chairman in 1985, he continued to serve as a valued member of the Board all the way up until his death on March 27, 2021.

“Tom was a mentor and inspiration to all of the College’s presidents,” says President Michael F. McLean. “His unflinching optimism and steadfast faith were important parts of the College’s success, and his prudence and good judgment helped guide the College through some difficult times.”

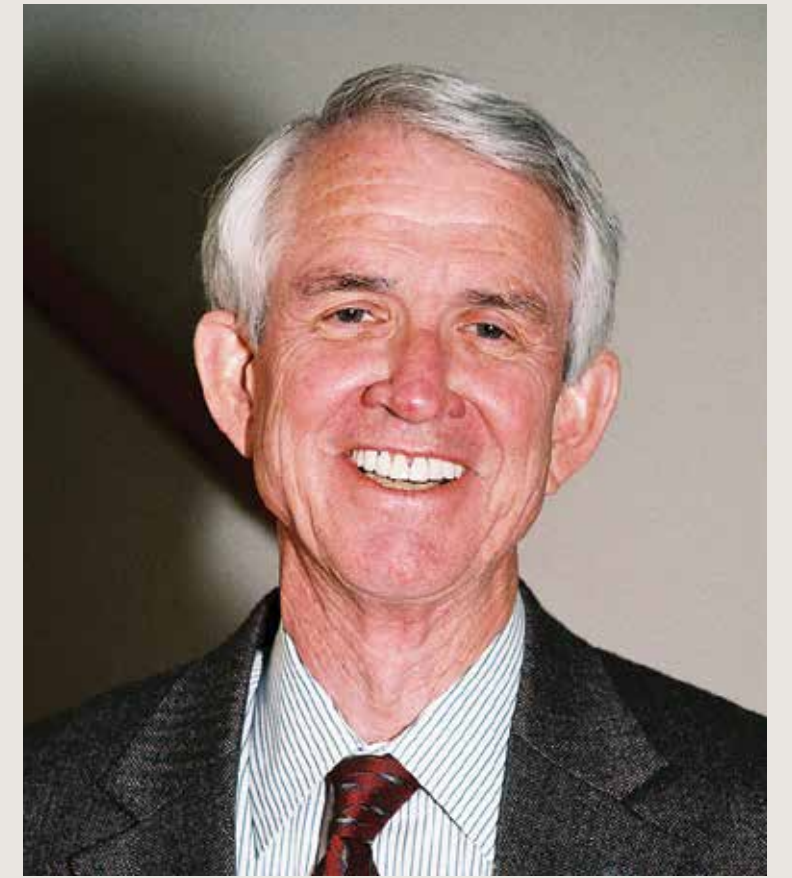
Born in West Virginia in 1933, Mr. Sullivan was one of the five children of Emily and Joseph Sullivan. After high school he served in the Air Force and attended Fairmont State College and the University of California, Los Angeles. A self-driven entrepreneur, he would go on to serve as president of Jefferson Realty Corp. and Jefferson Development Corp. in Los Angeles.

Throughout his life, Mr. Sullivan was active in his community, serving in many posts, including president of the Pasadena City College Foundation and president of the Los Angeles Rotary Club

“His unflinching optimism and steadfast faith were important parts of the College’s success, and his prudence and good judgment helped guide the College through some difficult times.”

No. 5. He was also a chairman of the Los Angeles County Productivity Commission, vice president of the Salvation Army board, a lector and clarinetist at Holy Family Church in South Pasadena, and a member of the Right to Life League.

His leadership of Thomas Aquinas College was invaluable. “Tom helped guide the College during its early years, when the fledgling institution was working very hard to establish itself,” notes Dr. McLean. “He oversaw the move from Calabasas to Santa Paula and the initial establishment of the College’s campus on the Ferndale Ranch.”



A long-term member of the President’s Council, in 1998 Mr. Sullivan was named to the Order of St. Albert — an honor reserved for those benefactors whose generosity to Thomas Aquinas College has been most extraordinary. His name is engraved on the pedestal of a statue of the Order’s patron that stands in the academic quadrangle on the California campus. “He was a very good friend and generous benefactor,” observes Dr. McLean. Adds tutor and fellow Board member Dr. Brian T. Kelly, “He had a generous spirit.”

Among his many gifts to the College was the sharing of his musical talents. The Tom Sullivan Dixieland Band — a fixture at 4th of July events in San Marino’s Lacy Park for decades — for many years also performed at Thomas Aquinas College dances. “He was devoted to the College for its steadfastness in its mission,” says Thomas Susanka, emeritus director of gift planning. “He admired the curriculum and especially its faculty and students.”

By God’s grace, Mr. Sullivan’s death was a holy one. “He suffered very little, was well prepared, and had received the Last Rites early enough before his death to be aware and consoled,” says Mr. Susanka. Mr. Sullivan is survived by his daughter, his son and daughter-in-law, and two grandchildren.

“May God bless and keep him,” says Peter L. DeLuca, one of the College’s founders and a member of the Board for more than 50 years. “He played an important part in the history of Thomas Aquinas College.”

“We can thank Tom for his fidelity and labor for the College by the prayers and Masses we offer for his soul and by keeping his family in our prayers,” says Mr. Susanka. “And I think we can be sure of his intercession for each of us and for the College, which he very ardently loved and served for more than 50 years.” ❖

IN MEMORIAM

Paul Daniel Pedry ('00)

July 7, 2020
Alumnus

Joan Coughlin

April 3, 2021
Sister of Tutor Glen ('81)

Paul Griffin, Jr.

April 6, 2021
Father of former
College Governor Paul III

Ann Noble Brown

April 7, 2021
Friend, trustee of the
Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation

Mary Kaiser

April 8, 2021
Wife of David ('79)

Elaine Copeland

April 10, 2021
Grandmother of Sarah (Cotugno '13)
Atchley and Kevin Cotugno ('16)

John David Pedry

April 22, 2021
Father of John ('00), Paul ('00),
and Mary (Wlazlo '03)

Paul H. Andres

May 13, 2021
Father of Christina (Deardurff '82)
and Tutor Anthony ('87); grandfather
of Dominique (Deardurff '07) Martin,
Benedict Deardurff ('09),
Clare (Deardurff '11) Schofield,
and Joseph ('12)
and Dominic ('24) Andres

Monica Marie (Estill '98) Turner

May 25, 2021
Alumna

Harry Ramirez

May 27, 2021
Brother of California Receptionist
Stephanie Sandoval

Yvonne Meyers

June 4, 2021
St. Thérèse of Lisieux Legacy
Society member

Judy Marie Coster

June 8, 2021
Mother of Kristen ('02)

Jeffrey Rubin

June 9, 2021
Father of Tutor Michael

Rosalio M. Batres

June 18, 2021
Father of Rev. Miguel Batres,
O.Praem. ('08)

Mike Shore

July 1, 2021
President's Council member

Rev. Nevin Ford, OFM

July 21, 2021
Uncle to several alumni, as well as
carver of the St. Thomas Aquinas
statue in St. Joseph's Commons

Mary Tim Crowley

July 22, 2021
Sister of Rev. Brendan ('85)
and Tutor Brian Kelly ('88)

Dr. Richard Tushla

July 24, 2021
Former physician to California campus

Rev. Joseph Koterski, S.J.

August 9, 2021
St. Thomas Day Lecturer
(California 2017, New England 2020)

Rev. Ramon Decaen ('96)

August 10, 2021
Brother of Tutor Christopher
Decaen ('93) and Theresa (Heaton '98)

James H. Ford, MD

August 14, 2021
Father of Catherine (Ford '77) O'Donnell,
Paul Ford ('78), Marguerite (Ford '79)
Grimm, Patrice (Ford '81) Atchley,
and Jacqueline (Ford '87) Lemmon;
grandfather of Maria (Mochow '07);
Genevieve ('05), Mike ('06), Paula ('08),
Adrienne (LaFave '14), and Matthew Grimm
('10); Angie (Cotugno '14), Liam ('14),
Juliet ('18) and Dominique
Atchley ('23); Cecelia (Dickman '10),
Sarah ('16), Rose (Brittain '20),
Sebastian ('14), Therese ('22), and
Abraham Lemmon ('24)

Matt Wernet ('93)

August 22, 2021
Husband of Mary Jo (Formolo '91),
brother of Paul ('91)

Helen Juliette Boyer

September 2, 2021
Mother of John Boyer ('07)

Cecilia Davidson ('20)

September 17, 2021
Daughter of Margot (Foucht '92)
and Dan Davidson ('91),
sister of Brendan ('17)

Madeleine Stebbins

September 17, 2021
Wife of H. Lyman Stebbins,
Thomas Aquinas College's first
Commencement Speaker (1975);
mother of John ('84)

Jane Walsh

October 20, 2021
Mother of Cathy ('80)

Bertha and Augustine Cervantes

October 30 | November 26, 2021
Parents of Elena ('86), Irene (Hacke '88),
and Therese (Kulda '89);
grandparents of Paul Kulda ('17)

Olin Strader

November 3, 2021
Father of Tutor Scott ('97)

Tim Cantu ('10)

November 9, 2021
Husband of Marie (Smillie '10),
brother of Br. Kevin ('15)

Elmo Thibodeaux

November 28, 2021
Father of Aaron ('14); Stepfather
of James Gray ('01) and
Rachel (Gray '05) McCauley

Michael Schmidgall

November 30, 2021
Son of Kim (Madsen '14)
and Matthew ('12)

Lt. Col. John J. Conklin

December 2, 2021
Father of Mary (Benigar '01),
Louis ('11), Patrick ('15),
and Maggie ('17)

Rev. Paul Lamb

December 23, 2021
President's Council and St. Thérèse
of Lisieux Legacy Society member

Zizi Angelica Searles ('02)

December 29, 2021
Alumna

Paul Hundt

December 30, 2021
Father of Peter ('99)

Dan LaFave ('02)

January 7, 2022
Father of Joseph ('09), Tom ('10),
Matthew ('13) and Genny ('18)

Bill Lawless

January 9, 2022
Father of Alicia (Van Hecke '92);
grandfather of Michael ('08),
Michelle ('13), and Chris
Lawless ('13) and Jacinta ('15)
and Matthew Van Hecke ('18)

Harry Ivers

January 18, 2022
Brother of Maureen (Coughlin '79),
Lorraine (Hoonhout '81), Marian
(Hartzell '82), Jessica (Langley '85),
and Sr. Maria Basilea ('88)

Arthur Selin

January 18, 2022
Father of Rev. Gary Selin ('89)

LeRoy Steichen

January 21, 2022
Father of Laura (Berquist '75), John ('81),
and Margaret (O'Reilly '84); grandfather of
Maggie (Hayden '98), John ('01), Theresa
(Mastroieni '01), Rachel (Montanaro '04),
James ('08), and Richard Berquist ('10);
Mary (Steichen '08) Kretschmer; and Thomas
('09), Cathleen (Ojeda '11), Annemarie
('16), Kevin ('18), Clare ('21), Mary ('22),
and Rosaleen O'Reilly ('24)

Wieslaw Marczewski

January 23, 2022
Father of California Chaplain
Rev. Robert Marczewski

Dr. Bernard Pegis ('94)

February 11, 2022
Husband of Melody (Stachyra '95);
brother of Barbara ('02), Mary ('82),
Margaret ('84), Anton ('86), Caroline ('90),
Ray ('90), and Cecilia (Capehart '99)



*Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light
shine upon them. May the souls of all the faithful departed,
through the mercy of God, rest in peace.*

Samuel Morson ('24) 2002-2021

A rising sophomore on the California campus, Samuel Morson ('24) was seriously injured in an automobile accident shortly after returning home for summer vacation last year. He died June 2, 2021, after receiving the Last Rites.

The second eldest of the six children of alumni Tracy (Colton '99) and Vince Morson ('00), Sam was known for his gregarious ways and adventurous spirit. He loved sports, especially mountain biking, fishing, hiking, skim boarding, and hang gliding. He swam competitively in high school, becoming both a lifeguard and swim instructor.

"As his high school years passed and Sam began to consider the next phase of his life, Tracy and I encouraged him to consider Thomas Aquinas College," his father eulogized at Sam's funeral. "He

"He wanted to live a life full of love and to be an energetic, faithful, and good man."

was reluctant, but agreed to attend the TAC High School Summer Program at the end of his junior year." Those two weeks were all it took. "Sam was hooked. There was no doubt in his mind — Thomas Aquinas College was where he wanted to be." He began his application the week after his return from the Summer Program and enrolled as a freshman the next fall.

"When asked why he committed to TAC, Sam said that the education and community would make him into the man that he wanted to become," recalled junior Claire Dragoo in her eulogy. "He wanted to live a life full of love and to be an energetic, faithful, and good man."

At the College he was widely regarded as "a bright, cheerful presence in the classroom," says tutor Dr. Andrew Seeley. "He was a great kid," adds Dean John Goyette. "He always had a positive attitude, a cheerful smile, and a good sense of humor. He was well-loved."



During his first semester, the challenges of student life and the College's academic program proved daunting for Sam. "Initially he had been overwhelmed by the volume of the TAC curriculum and felt early on that he would have to drop out and return home," his father shared. "He persevered, however, and eventually worked out a routine of study, work, recreation, and sleep that was successful. He went on to tell me that, after that achievement, he felt he would be able to face any challenge that came to him, be it academic or otherwise. He said he felt like he was doing something important and that he was in the right place."

Sam's one year at the College also proved to be a time of great spiritual growth. "He really did love TAC and the friends he had made there," remarked the priest who delivered his funeral homily, Rev. Derek Lappe, pastor of Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Church in Bremerton, Washington. "He had developed his life of prayer."

Sam also began to attend daily Mass, at first, "because it was what everyone did," said Claire. But over the course of the year, "it was clear that he began to fall in love with the Mass." Soon Sam was encouraging his friends to attend, "and he led the stream of students to the Chapel every day."

Sam's earthly life ended much too soon, and his tutors and fellow students on the California campus miss him dearly. Yet all take consolation in the knowledge of his intercession, and in the awareness, as Fr. Lappe described it, that "the loss of Sam will be for a very, very brief amount of time, compared to all of eternity." ❖

Dr. Stephen Kraychy 1928-2021

A Thomas Aquinas College parent, grandparent, and generous benefactor, Stephen Kraychy passed away peacefully, with the aid of the sacraments, on Sunday, October 17, 2021. His wife of 66 years, Mary, and their son, Jim, were lovingly at his side.

"I would be hard pressed to name any friend of the College more steadfast or loyal than Steve," says Paul F. Blewett, director of gift planning. "He and Mary supported the College for as long as they have known about it. They have been members of the President's Council for nearly 50 years. And, even in death, Steve continues to support the College as a member of the St. Thérèse of Lisieux Legacy Society, having included our students in his estate plans."

Born in Alberta, Canada, to Maria and Nicholas Kraychy in 1928, Dr. Kraychy graduated with honors from the University of Alberta in 1950. Five years later he earned a doctorate in chemistry from the University of Wisconsin, where his future wife was completing a master's degree of her own. Over the next half century, he had a long, successful career as a chemist, including jobs with the Sloan Kettering Institute for Cancer Research and G. D. Searle & Co.

Meanwhile, the Kraychys would go on to have a son, two daughters, and, in turn, 15 grandchildren, seven of whom are TAC alumni or current students — and 29 great-grandchildren. Family was one of Mr. Kraychy's many passions, along with flying, photography, fishing, ice hockey, woodworking, camping, and, of course, his faith.

The Kraychys first discovered Thomas Aquinas College not long after its founding in 1971. They made their first gift to the Annual Fund in 1973. In 1974 — the same year that their daughter Kathy (Sauder '78) entered the freshman class — they joined the President's Council, and to this day they hold the distinction of being its longest-serving members, having contributed, consistently and without failure, every year since. They have also given occasional in-kind gifts, such as books and stocks, as well as regular monetary donations matched by Dr. Kraychy's former employer.

"Thomas Aquinas College is outstanding in providing good, solid education and moral grounding to its students," said Mrs. Kraychy in a 2009 Newsletter story. "It produces well-rounded



graduates who are a credit to their families and to the Church, and who serve their country in one aspect or another."

The good work of the College, however, could not happen without the benefactors who make it possible and the parents and grandparents who entrust their children to its care.

"The Kraychys bravely invested in Thomas Aquinas College when it was young and fledgling, because they believed in its mission," says Mr. Blewett. "They have blessed the College in so many ways; we can only hope the College has likewise blessed them in return." ❖

Because the future needs the wisdom of the past ...



**... help shape the future
with a legacy gift today.**

Please contact Paul Blewett, director of gift planning
pblewett@thomasaquinas.edu • 805-421-5924



**The St. Thérèse of
Lisieux Legacy Society**

“We Have to Become Holy”

An Interview with the Most Rev. Edward Scharfenberger, D.D.

Thank you, Your Excellency, for joining us for last fall’s Convocation in New England. Would you please tell us about your experience on campus?

Well it was the first time I visited, and it was a beautiful campus. The joy of my visit was meeting the faculty and the students. I was impressed by the wide variety of

students, students from so many different countries. I know that they’re getting a classical education and have some good skills in philosophy and language, and I was really impressed by their ability to engage in a number of issues. The Dean asked me to say something to them, and I basically just encouraged them to be themselves, to have confidence that they

are here for a purpose, and that the Lord is really looking out for them. All in all, it is a very cheerful, happy campus, and I got a good sense of love and cooperation among the faculty and the students.

Your diocese is only two hours away. Would you please describe it?

Even though it is the capital of New

York State and a real center of learning — there are a lot of universities here — Albany is a very rural diocese. The diocese is about 10,000 square miles. We have a lot of rural parishes, a lot of farmland. We have mountains on both sides of the diocese: the Adirondacks to the north, the Catskills to the south. A number of people have migrated up from the city, and we have lots of diversity, with people from Myanmar, Poland, Korea, Vietnam, Mexico and Latin America. We also have 125 priests, so about as many as we have churches. We are doing OK with our vocations of late. We have about 40 men in the discernment process, so that’s an uptick over the years.

What would you say are the biggest challenges in shepherding your diocese?

When I first became bishop about eight years ago, I was concerned about the lack of vocations. I wanted to promote vocations, so as to keep our parishes thriving and lively. We also have a number of parishes that are struggling with capital expenses and population shifts. Then there’s the challenge of reaching out to those who have become unaffiliated, the “nones.” We have been putting a lot of emphasis on that, trying to invite more people in. Young people are often very willing and enthusiastic about coming forward, but they need to be invited, and we have been doing a great deal of work here, bringing young people together.

So I would say the challenge is basically trying to forge good relationships to center our faith. It’s ultimately a Christocentric faith. We want to do good deeds, but we want our faith to be centered on the one Who sanctifies us. I think a deeper understanding of the sacredness of the Eucharist and its transforming power, the importance of developing a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, are themes that permeate all of my preaching.



People who have been abused, many of them still have not found a place where they can talk about it. There are many people who suffer in silence. So, ironically, we have a dilemma: There are many who see the Church as predatory historically and can’t get over that, and yet, it is the Church itself that is best suited to be the healer. We need people who can bring back those who have gone away.

The biggest challenge, I think, is the challenge to holiness. We have to become holy, let God make us holy, to sanctify us and trans-

form us, and to be that light, that sign that attracts people to God because the Gospel is eminently attractive. We can’t be ashamed of being what we truly are, even as we are honest and forthright about where we have failed, at least as an institution, and how the Church is always there to be reformed and purified. We should not lose faith or confidence that the Lord is with us, and will work through the Church. It’s the lighthouse, the sign of hope in the world.

How is your diocese recovering from all the disruptions that Covid and public-health measures have imposed on the life of the faithful?

In Albany we have experienced an uptick in attendance in our diocesan schools, and I think that has to do with doing what we do well as Catholics. We work with parents, with families, and we have managed to strengthen our relationship with them by meeting them halfway. Some didn’t want to have full, in-person classrooms, so we accommodated; we had combinations of schooling and homeschooling. That created a lot of good faith, and we managed to keep our schools open.

Our churches, too, are pretty well intact. Many people worried that after the lockdowns parishioners would not come back to Mass, but those worst fears are not materializing. There are some who may not be back yet, but that’s not because they don’t miss the Mass, it’s because they are still

“The biggest challenge, I think, is the challenge to holiness. We have to become holy, let God make us holy, to sanctify us and transform us, and to be that light, that sign that attracts people to God because the Gospel is eminently attractive.”

Before coming to Albany, when you served as a priest in the Diocese of Brooklyn, you were a member of the board that reviewed allegations against clergy for the sexual abuse of minors. How do you think the Church is faring with regards to cleaning up the scandal?

The systemic, unaddressed, suffer-in-silence patterns of abuse that were exposed in the last 20 or 30 years — those seem to have been addressed. What is not yet addressed in society at large is the prevalence of sexual abuse and its connection to drugs and domestic violence, which is primarily a family-related issue, and its ties to human trafficking. It’s all a vicious cycle.

Here’s the thing, and I can say this with confidence: The only force in society that is really capable of healing this is the Church.



The Most Rev. Edward Scharfenberger, Bishop of Albany, was the Convocation Speaker at Thomas Aquinas College, New England, on August 21, 2021. Here he and the College’s chaplains pose with members of the faculty prior to the Convocation exercises.

afraid. I'll be very frank, it has to do with how much news you watch. I tell people, "I don't care if it's CNN or Fox, if you watch a lot of news, you're going to be caught up in a lot of fear." Fear has really been selling news over the last two years, and the peo-



"We should not lose faith or confidence that the Lord is with us, and will work through the Church. It's the lighthouse, the sign of hope in the world."

ple who have managed to adapt focus on their family lives and being sensible.

I'll tell you another thing, too. In some parishes — those where the pastors or the parish leadership managed to keep good contact with the people — our collections actually went up during the restrictions. It's been amazing, those parishes have done well.

As you may know, some 10 percent of the College's students go on to the priesthood or religious life. Do you have any advice for young people who are discerning vocations?

A vocation comes from God. It is a true calling, and all you really have to figure out is, "Is this feeling I have really coming from the Lord?" I say this at confirmations, "There are probably a few of you who have felt the call from God. Chances are, if you feel this way, you might be afraid to tell anybody because you're afraid they will tell you that you're crazy. There are many priests and nuns today who, when they first felt that sense, were discouraged from doing that. It can be a very tragic mistake, because if the Lord is calling you, you've got to pay attention."

Don't be afraid to share this sense that you may be feeling with somebody you can trust, such as a priest, a sister, or a parent or friend who will encourage you. And do not pay attention to anybody who will discourage you, because they don't know what they're talking about. They're not really interested in your well-being. You may be challenging them in some way just by saying this. For all you know, maybe they thought about a vocation at one point and rejected it.

If you worry, if you say, "I'm not holy enough" — that's for God to decide, not for you. And if you are getting that call, you will get the grace to follow it. Some men are reluctant to answer a priestly vocation because they fear missing out on fatherhood. But I'll give you this: I feel more like a father now than I ever have before. I have numerous children that I care for and love. If it's fathering that you really want to experience in life, you are not going to be deprived of it through the priesthood.

Finally, if you see somebody who you think may possibly be called to the priesthood or religious life, don't be afraid to say, "I think you would make a good priest," or "I think you would be a good sister, do you ever think about that?" I know many men and women who are priests and nuns today because one person — a friend, a parent, a sibling — invited them. Don't overlook the power of inviting. ❖

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THOMAS AQUINAS COLLEGE
January 2022

New England
First Seniors Look Forward to First Commencement this Spring
In the fall of 2019, 34 students who had just completed their freshman year at Thomas Aquinas College, California, volunteered to make the 3,000-mile trek to found the newly acquired New England campus. These
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Top News

All College
Summer Conferences on Both Campuses
Thomas Aquinas College will host two academic conferences this summer on matters Thomistic and theological. Alumni and friends are encouraged to register.
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New England
Transplanted Tutors Approach Second Semester
The two newest members of the New England faculty are readying themselves for their second semester in Northfield — tutors Dr. Steven Cain and Dr. Peter Cross.
[Full story](#)



UPCOMING EVENTS

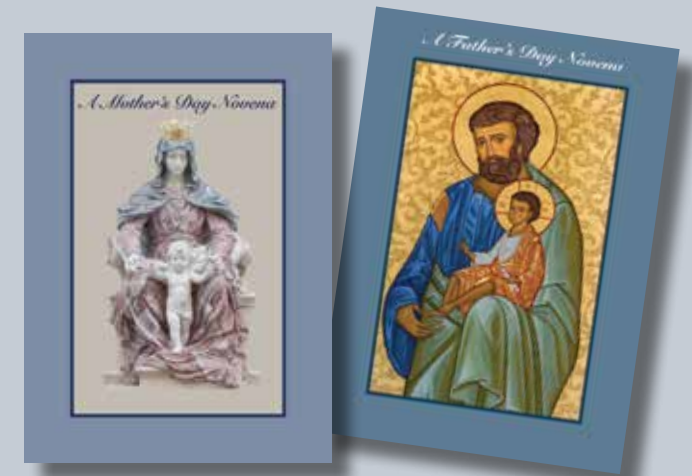
45th California Commencement
May 14

1st New England Commencement
May 21

California High School Great Books Program
July 10 - July 23

New England High School Great Books Program
July 24 - August 6

THIS SPRING Honor Thy Father & Mother WITH A NOVENA OF MASSES



Beginning on Mother's Day (May 8) and Father's Day (June 19), the chaplains of Thomas Aquinas College will offer a novena of Masses for mothers and fathers, respectively. Each parent included in the novena will receive a beautiful, personalized card from the College.

Cost: \$5 per card for shipping and handling.
Mother's Day names must be received by May 6; Father's Day by June 17.

thomasaquinas.edu/novenas

STUDENT LIFE



1. The Champions of January's soccer tournament rejoice in their victory. 2. Seniors take a break from War and Peace for a Russian tea party. 3. Members of the TAC Orchestra play at the Advent Concert. 4. A team captain rolls the die in the annual game of Trivial & Quadrivial Pursuits. 5. Three freshmen pose for a photo at the Christmas Dance. 6. Students prepare for turkey at the Thanksgiving Dinner. 7. Br. Michael Thomas Cain ('18) and fellow Dominicans meet with students during a vocations visit.



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1. Sisters from the Nashville Dominicans meet with students during a November visit to campus. 2. Students compete on Meany Gymnasium's basketball court. 3. The TAC Choir sings at Advent's "Lessons and Carols" in Our Mother of Perpetual Help Chapel. 4. The Tracy Student Center is awash in lights for the Advent Dance. 5. Champion fiddlers Tashina and Orin Lindley pay a visit to Olivia Music Hall. 6. Students gather for breakfast in Gould Hall. 7. Upperclassmen battle underclassmen in the annual Turkey Bowl.



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