

THOMAS AQUINAS COLLEGE COMMENCEMENT 2022

Volume 50, Issue 3

**First
Commencement
in New England ...**



... and 48th in California!



FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT

A Time for Reflection, Gratitude —
and Prayer

Dr. McLean’s Remarks to the Class of 2022

Let me begin with some remarks about what we are celebrating and about what your Commencement signifies:

You have been diligent students and faithful members of the community. You have worked hard at your studies, helped to foster healthy friendships, contributed to the common good, and tended to your spiritual well-being. We thank and commend you for those gifts, and we thank you for what you have given to Thomas Aquinas College. You have contributed to the success of our classes, to our musical, dramatic, and athletic culture, and to our worship.

You have been tutored by a wonderful faculty and have been taught by the likes of Homer, Euclid, Plato, Aristotle, St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, Shakespeare, Newton, Newman, and Einstein.

You have read some of the greatest books our civilization has produced and pondered some of the deepest questions humanity faces. You have begun in wonder and, I hope, ended with the beginnings of wisdom and — as a result of true friendships with your tutors and fellow students and the ministry of our chaplains — grown in virtue and ended a few steps closer to the Beatific Vision. Because of these things, you have been well prepared to serve your communities, your country, and your church.

These good things have come about through the providence of God and the efforts and sacrifices of many people.

First among them are your parents, who entrusted you to us in the first place and have worked hard to make it possible for you to attend this college.

Second are your tutors, who have facilitated your introduction to the Great Books, the liberal arts, and the crowning disciplines of philosophy and theology.

Third are our chaplains, who have enabled you to benefit from God’s graces, graces which make all things possible and without which we can do nothing of enduring significance.

Fourth are our administrative faculty and staff, who help to ensure that your material needs are met and that you are well provided with all that is necessary for a life of relative leisure and contemplation.

Fifth are our benefactors and Board of Governors, whose generosity, advice, and counsel make our facilities, financial aid, and all of the College’s other enterprises possible.

Be proud of what you have achieved and grateful for what you have received. Pray for your benefactors, pray for the College, and pray that you, and all of your classmates, may continue to grow in age and wisdom and grace before God and men.

Thank you.



*“You have read some of
the greatest books our
civilization has produced
and pondered some of
the deepest questions
humanity faces.”*

COMMENCEMENT 2022

Two Commencements,
One Class6

Dr. Paul J. O'Reilly ('84) Takes
Presidential Oath of Office.....8

College Awards Top Honors9

Senior Portraits and
Thesis Titles28

What's Next for the
Class of 2022 52



The Thomas Aquinas College Newsletter
is published quarterly by the Office of
Advancement, Thomas Aquinas College.

President
Paul J. O'Reilly, Ph.D.

Vice President for Advancement
James C. Link

Director of Communications / Editor
Chris Weinkopf

Communications Manager
Benjamin Trull

Student Photographers
Regina Terreri (CA'22)
Tam Nguyen (NE'25)

Correspondence should be addressed to:
Editor, College Newsletter
10,000 Ojai Road
Santa Paula, CA 93060
newsletter@thomasaquinas.edu

Free subscriptions:
thomasaquinas.edu/subscribe



CALIFORNIA

48th Annual Commencement12
The California Class of 2022

Addresses 14

- Baccalaureate Mass homily by
Rev. John Nicholas Blaha ('02)
- Senior Class Address by Jordan Raum ('22)
- Commencement Address by Carl A. Anderson

Senior Reflections 23
By Brandon Wang ('22) and Mary Pipes ('22)

“No One Wants Fake Love. Everyone
Wants the Real Thing.” 25
An Interview with Carl A. Anderson

NEW ENGLAND

1st Annual Commencement38
The California Class of 2022

Addresses40

- Baccalaureate Mass homily by Bishop McManus
- Senior Class Address by Peter McDonald ('22)
- Commencement Address by the Most Rev. Robert
Joseph McManus, S.T.D

Senior Reflections 47
By Peter Goyette ('22) and Theresa Peek ('22)

“The Victory has been Won”49
An Interview with Bishop McManus



Two Commencements, One Class

United by a Shared Pursuit of the Truth: The TAC Class of 2022

Four years ago, 135 students from across the United States and beyond — the Thomas Aquinas College Class of 2022 — came together for the first time at Convocation 2018, held on the California campus. From the beginning, the class's members knew that they would soon be separated. The College was preparing to open its newly acquired New England campus in Northfield, Massachusetts, and about a quarter of the incoming freshmen would transfer there the following year.

Still, despite the distance and differing climates, the Class of 2022 would remain united.

Its members would be bound not only

“Don’t forget that this education is training for happiness.”

by their common freshman year, but also by something much greater: their shared experience of Thomas Aquinas College’s unique program of Catholic liberal education. Together, they would read the same great authors of Western civilization, ponder the same great works, and pursue Truth by the light of faith. They would also partake in

many of the same rites and customs, which pioneering students and faculty would work to replicate on the East Coast.

The culmination of this shared experience came in May, when the California campus celebrated its 48th Commencement exercises, and New England its first.

Called to Heroism in California

The May 14 California Commencement began with the Baccalaureate Mass of the Holy Spirit in Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel, offered by Rev. Nicholas Blaha (’02), an alumnus and priest of the Diocese of Kansas City, Kansas. “Today begins a new entry in the history of your perseverance that will not be complete until you stand before your Redeemer to deliver your account,” said Fr. Blaha, joined at the altar by chaplains Rev. Paul Raftery, O.P., Rev. John Mary Chung, and Rev. Robert Marczewski. “May it be a heroic one.”

After Mass, the congregants relocated to a tent erected in the academic quadrangle, just outside the Chapel, for the graduation ceremony itself. Jordan Raum (’22) presented the Senior Address. “Don’t forget that this education is training for happiness,” he reminded his classmates. “The purpose of our time

here was to teach us how to find the answer which leads to life in abundance.”

Serving as the College’s Commencement Speaker was Carl A. Anderson, former Supreme Knight of the Knights of Columbus, who urged the new graduates to supplement their knowledge *about* Christ with the active imitation of Christ. “In every age the Lord is alive and acting through the lives of His followers,” he said. “Therefore every age is an age of Christian witness. Your age will be so because of your witness.”



... and into Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel in California

Ennobling Minds in New England

One week later, the New England Class of 2022 celebrated its graduation at the East Coast campus’s first-ever Commencement exercises, starting with that morning’s Baccalaureate Mass in the newly dedicated Our Mother of Perpetual Help Chapel. The Most Rev. Robert J. McManus, Bishop of Worcester, served as the principal celebrant, with chaplains Rev. Greg Markey and Rev. Carlos Viego concelebrating.

Drawing on the day’s Scripture readings, His Excellency used his homily to re-

“The most beautiful things ever thought have been planted in our minds.”

mind the graduates that, though the task of living the truth is daunting, they will never be alone: “The light of Christ enriches our faith and illuminates our intellects, thereby helping to establish a culture of truth that acknowledges that love is more powerful than hate; that truth will always triumph over falsity; and that for those who love God everything works together for good.”

When Mass drew to a close, the faithful made their way across campus to the century-old Moody Auditorium for the Commencement exercises. “The founding of a new campus informs what we have done in our education these past four years,” Peter McDonald (’22) told classmates in his Senior Address. “Beautiful new floors and roofs, doors and paths and gardens were all brought about to make a resplendent and ennobling setting for study. Likewise, our education has done the same for our minds. The most beautiful things ever thought have been planted in our minds.”

In the ensuing Commencement Address, Bishop McManus recalled the example of St. Benedict, whose flight from the world made possible the medieval renewal of Western culture: “You have received an excellent classical Catholic education here at Thomas Aquinas College that has prepared you to be the new ‘Benedicts’ of our contemporary American culture.”

Not Distinction, but Unity

Although situated in different locales, the two Commencements were remarkably similar. In two beautiful chapels dedicated to Our Lady, attendees gave thanks to God; seniors and dignitaries delivered inspiring

addresses; the College conferred degrees; and outgoing President Michael F. McLean delivered the annual Charge to Graduates. “You are charged, beginning this day with maintaining, defending, and protecting your Catholic heritage,” he began. “You must strive in your lives to live for God alone, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and to insist, in season and out of season, on the primacy of Peter and the Church he governs.”

And in California as in New England, the College’s newest graduates responded, as they have for 48 years, by singing together the words of the Psalmist: *Non nobis, Domine, non nobis, sed nomine tua da gloria*: “Not to us, Lord, not to us, but to Your name give the glory.”

On both coasts, the order of the day was not distinction, but unity. For while the two campuses may be separated by 3,000 miles, and while at any given time one may be bathed in the sun while the other is dusted in snow, both remain committed to Thomas Aquinas College’s mission of Catholic liberal education. The College’s culture both shapes and is shaped by that common pursuit of truth, and thanks to the Class of 2022, that culture has continued to flourish in California — and has reached its first full blossoming in New England. ❖



Members of the faculty and the Class of 2022 process into Our Mother of Perpetual Help Chapel on the New England campus ...

Dr. Paul J. O'Reilly ('84) Takes Oath of Office as College's Fifth President

Formal Inauguration Set for October 22

At the conclusion of Thomas Aquinas College's first New England Commencement on May 21, there were two other historic "firsts" on the Northfield, Massachusetts, campus: Dr. Paul J. O'Reilly ('84) took the presidential Oath of Office, becoming the College's first alumnus to assume the presidency — and the first president to take office in New England.

"Paul O'Reilly was deeply invested in helping to establish and develop our New England campus from the very beginning," said outgoing President Michael F. McLean. "It is only fitting that he would take the Oath of Office here in Northfield."

As the graduation ceremony drew to its close, Dr. McLean

removed the Chain of Office, which he has worn to academic celebrations throughout his 12 years as TAC president, and presented it to Chairman of the Board of Governors Scott Turicchi, who, in turn, entrusted the chain to Dr. O'Reilly. Dr. O'Reilly then

"Paul O'Reilly was deeply invested in helping to establish and develop our New England campus from the very beginning. It is only fitting that he would take the Oath of Office here in Northfield."

approached the lectern, where the Commencement Speaker — the Most Rev. Robert Joseph McManus, S.T.D., Bishop of Worcester, Massachusetts — administered the Oath of Office, as well as the Oath of Fidelity, undertaken by all members of the College's teaching faculty.

"It was six years ago when I first came to this campus, in the



Dr. Paul J. O'Reilly receives the presidential chain of office from Chairman of the Board of Governors Scott Turicchi

hopes that it may one day become the East Coast home of Thomas Aquinas College," remarked the new president. "To be here now for our first New England Commencement, and to take the presidential Oath of Office, is humbling and gratifying. Thanks be to God for the blessings He has bestowed upon the College, as well as to Dr. McLean for his 12 years of tremendous leadership."

A 30-year member of the teaching faculty who previously served as vice president for advancement, Dr. O'Reilly came to the College as a student in 1980, shortly after his family fled to North America to escape the Troubles in Northern Ireland. Within one year of his graduation, he 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.

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 rising junior on the California campus and a daughter, Mary ('22), who was among the members of the inaugural New England graduating class.

While the College will host a formal inauguration on the California campus on October 22, Dr. O'Reilly assumed the responsibilities of the presidency upon his taking the Oath of Office. Free from his administrative responsibilities, Dr. McLean, meanwhile, intends to devote his energies more fully to teaching students on the California campus.

Newly sworn in as Thomas Aquinas College's fifth president, Dr. O'Reilly asked his colleagues, fellow alumni, benefactors, parents, students, and other friends for their prayerful support. "Please pray for me and for the College," he said, "as we continue to pursue our mission of Catholic liberal education in the years to come." ♦



College Awards Top Honors at Commencement

The Saint Thomas Aquinas Medallion & Order of St. Albert

In its first year with Commencement exercises on both coasts, Thomas Aquinas College not only conferred 115 degrees, it also honored two esteemed guests, four dear friends, and a beloved president.

The Saint Thomas Aquinas Medallion

Established by the College's Board of Governors in 1975, the Saint Thomas Aquinas Medallion is awarded by the Board's resolution to those Catholics who have shown, through their lives and work, an extraordinary dedication to God and His holy church. Each recipient has demonstrated unfailing adherence to the Magisterium as well as influential leadership in advancing the Church's teachings. Previous recipients include St. Teresa of Calcutta, Avery Cardinal Dulles, Francis Cardinal George, and George Cardinal Pell.

At its two 2022 Commencement ceremonies, the College conferred three Medallions. On May 14 in California, it honored Carl A. Anderson, former Supreme Knight of the Knights of Columbus, who delivered the day's Commencement Address. Chairman of the Board of Governors Scott Turicchi cited Mr. Anderson's "unceasing efforts to protect the lives of the unborn ... and his leadership of the world's largest Catholic fraternal service organization, the Knights of Columbus."



Chairman of the Board of Governors Scott Turicchi presents the Saint Thomas Aquinas Medallion to Carl A. Anderson, former Supreme Knight of the Knights of Columbus ...



... and to TAC's outgoing president, Dr. Michael F. McLean.

That same day the College awarded a Medallion to Dr. Michael F. McLean, who, after 12 years of faithful service, would be stepping down as TAC president. Mr. Turicchi extolled Dr. McLean for "his administration of the College, allowing for expansion to a second campus in New England; for his protection of the community against natural disasters such as the Thomas Fire and the COVID-19 pandemic; and for his preservation of the mission of the College, especially in successfully challenging the HHS Contraceptive Mandate."

"The Saint Thomas Aquinas Medallion is awarded by the Board's resolution to those Catholics who have shown, through their lives and work, an extraordinary dedication to God and His holy church."

A week later, at the first-ever New England Commencement ceremony, the College awarded the Medallion to the Most Rev. Robert J. McManus, Bishop of Worcester, Massachusetts, who delivered that day's Commencement Address. Mr. Turicchi commended His Excellency's commitment to "promoting authentic Catholic education and devotion to the Real Presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist in



Mr. Turicchi presents the Saint Thomas Aquinas Medallion to the Most Rev. Robert J. McManus, S.T.D., Bishop of Worcester.

the Diocese of Worcester,” citing as well “his courage and clarity in publicly addressing the difficult moral issues of our day according to the Magisterium of the Church.”

The Order of Saint Albert

The College established the Order of Saint Albert in 1998 under the patronage of St. Albert the Great, who taught St. Thomas Aquinas. Membership in the Order recognizes those benefactors whose generosity to Thomas Aquinas College has been exceptional — for, just as St. Thomas would not have risen to the heights that he did without the aid of his mentor, so, too, Thomas Aquinas College could not accomplish the good that it achieves without the generosity of these benefactors. Members receive a cast bronze bust of St. Albert, and their names are engraved on the plinth of his statue, which occupies a corner of the California campus’s academic quadrangle.



Jody Olsen-Kelly receives a bust of St. Albert the Great on behalf of her six siblings for her late parents, Dorothy and Kenneth Olsen, who were inducted posthumously into the Order of St. Albert.

At the Commencement Exercises in California, the College posthumously welcomed Dorothy and Kenneth Olsen into the Order. “Throughout their 75 years of marriage, the Olsens provided their family, friends, and all who knew them a model for Christian living,” said Mr. Turicchi. “They were convinced of the good that Thomas Aquinas College accomplishes in the minds and souls of the young people who study here, and they demonstrated that conviction with generous gifts during their lives and by leaving the College a magnificent legacy gift.”

Five of the Olsens’ seven children were in attendance, with their daughter Jody Olsen-Kelly receiving the award on her parents’ behalf. “Our family is honored beyond belief that somebody would go to this extent to honor our mom and dad,” she said. Imitating her parents, Dr. Olsen-Kelly then quickly directed the spotlight elsewhere: “Graduates, with me, in honor of my parents, who were St. Albert to us, I would invite you to join me in a round of applause to the people who have been St. Albert to you.”

The next week in Massachusetts, Mr. Turicchi extended membership in the Order of St. Albert to June and Jack Heffernan, who have been significant benefactors since the early 1990s, first in California and now in New England as well. Among their many gifts to the College was an endowed scholarship fund in memory of Angela



At the New England Commencement, the College inducted June and Jack Heffernan into the Order of St. Albert.

Baird (’00), who tragically died in 1997 following a hiking accident. Also of special note is their investment in the New England campus for the renovation of the Pope St. John Paul II Athletic Center and a classroom building. Mr. Heffernan additionally served on the College’s Board of Governors from 1994 to 2003.

“The College is deeply grateful to the Heffernans for their great generosity and their friendship,” said President Michael F. McLean. “They are not able to be with us today for a formal induction ceremony. Please keep them in your prayers in thanksgiving for their magnificent generosity to Thomas Aquinas College. May God reward them a hundredfold.” ❖

“Pick Your Parents Carefully”

A Daughter Reflects on Her Mom and Dad’s Induction into the Order of St. Albert

by Jody Olsen-Kelly

Note: At California Commencement 2022, Thomas Aquinas College inducted late benefactors Dorothy and Kenneth Olsen into the Order of St. Albert, in recognition of their tremendous generosity to the College and its students. Five of the Olsens’ seven children came to the ceremony, and their eldest daughter, Jody, offered the following words on their behalf.

Well, I’m nervous, because I’m one of seven — five boys and two girls — and it was one of the boys who was supposed to talk today. Any of you sisters know how those brothers just dump that on you at a certain point in time? I am consoled, though, by an entertainer who was a wonderful Catholic man, Bob Hope, who said, “If you’re not nervous, you don’t respect your audience.”

I want to just say “thank you” to the people on this stage: your esteemed faculty, your President McLean, President-elect O’Reilly, the members of the Board of Governors, your families, the Class of 2022. Our family is honored beyond belief that someone would go to this extent to honor our mom and dad.

Age has a gift. If we’re lucky, we are able to look back and see what’s most important in life. And as I used to tell my students, the No. 1 decision you make is to pick your parents carefully. My siblings and I nailed that. My hunch is, given what this college is about, what you have accomplished, that you know that you hit the lottery, too, Class of 2022.

Mike, Chris, Pat, Paul, Jody, Kim, and Steve were lucky enough to be raised by people who emulated what St. Albert was to St. Thomas Aquinas: mentors showing us the way, how to navigate this life with all its complexities and challenges. We had parents who had a deep and abiding faith in a loving God.

“I would invite you to join me in a round of applause to the people who have been St. Albert to you.”

Dad would be beaming today, trying to hold back how much of this light is going on him, because he would understand that’s not appropriate, and my mom would be deferring. Dad beaming, Mom deferring, understanding how much their fortune had to do with



who loved them into existence: their parents, their grandparents, their faculty, their mentors throughout life.

They also understood and lived words written and attributed to Fr. Pedro Arrupe. Now, if I do anything inappropriate today at Thomas Aquinas College, you’ll have to forgive me. I had 40 years with the Jesuits. Pedro Arrupe, who was a witness to the Bomb at Hiroshima, and spent his life processing that, told us, “Nothing is more practical than finding God, that is, than falling in love, in a quite absolute, final way. What you are in love with, what seizes your imagination, will affect everything. It will decide what will get you out of bed in the morning, what you will do with your evenings, how you spend your weekends, what you read, who you know, what breaks your heart, and what amazes you with joy and gratitude.” Mom would say to you, and Dad would echo, “Fall in love, stay in love, and it will decide everything.”

So graduates, with me, in honor of my parents, who were St. Albert to us, I would invite you to join me in a round of applause to the people who have been St. Albert to you. Thank you. ❖



CALIFORNIA COMMENCEMENT



THE CLASS OF 2022



PATRON
Bl. Pier Giorgio Frassati

QUOTATION

*May today there be peace within.
May you trust God that you are
exactly where you are meant to be.
May you not forget the infinite
possibilities that are born of faith.
May you use those gifts that you
have received, and pass on the love
that has been given to you.*
— St. Teresa of Avila

“Heroic People Need Heroes”

Homily from the 2022 California Baccalaureate Mass of the Holy Spirit

by Rev. John Nicholas Blaha ('02)
Priest of the Diocese of Kansas City, Kansas

Brothers and sisters in Christ: Glory, honor, blessing, and praise to Almighty God, Who has called us out of darkness into His wonderful light.

With 50 years of service to our Holy Mother, Christ's Bride, on the record, we arrive at this happy day in which we confer these degrees upon you and send you out to serve God and neighbor. In the name of the innumerable figures who have visibly and invisibly contributed to your success, I pray that the Spirit of Truth, the Advocate, be with you. For our Lord promised: “You are to recognize Him; He will be continually at your side, nay, He will be in you” (Jn. 14:17).

It is this truth-giving spirit that flows *ex corde ecclesiae* which is the principle and foundation of your education. Your persever-



Thomas Aquinas College's founding president, Dr. Ronald P. McArthur

ance in this gift has brought you to a place of unimaginable abundance, a fullness that makes you like God. Today marks a turning point in which you must bear this Spirit of truth into the disorienting maze of the world. Today begins a new entry in the history of your perseverance that will not be complete until you stand before your Redeemer to deliver your account. May it be a heroic one.

Heroic people need heroes. Heroes beget heroes. So, search them out. Stay close to them. Let their lives find an echo in yours.

Heroic Giant

I found a hero here, though at the time I did not know it. In 2013, I came to Los Angeles for an ordination, and paid the College a visit during my stay. It was a pilgrimage of sorts to see this beautiful new chapel and utter my lament before God as to how decadent the present generation of students was in comparison to the spartan days of yore. Imagine, if you can, what it was like to pray while deprived of the aid of majesty!

My visit was marked by the deaths of two individuals. The first was the death of one of the College's founders, Dr. Ronald McArthur, by any account the hero of many, and rightly so. The news of his passing reached us just a few hours before I was scheduled to offer the midday Mass here, and I found myself scrambling to find the words to honor the passing of one of the College's founders in the presence of an unexpectedly packed chapel.



This was difficult for me. I had never had Dr. McArthur as a tutor, and the only contact I ever had with him was an informal visit he made to the campus during my junior year, about which I remember only two things: The first was that, during an informal talk to a group of students in the Commons, he attributed not just the survival of the College but its continued fruitfulness to the daily recitation of the Rosary, the habit of which was carried forward mostly by the students. He was emphatic about this. I was gratified to learn that you were just presented with a Rosary in his memory.

The second thing I remember was his declaration that most Catholic institutions of higher learning were not worth the dynamite it would require to blow them up. Despite being in his eighties, his booming voice made me wonder what it would have been like to hear him in the flowering of his strength. Dr. McArthur was a giant that changed the course of many lives, present company included, and many hundreds more. His legacy

is enormous and unbelievably beautiful, and we would be remiss for not acknowledging here in the Lord's presence the foresight and determination of those who cut and graded this road for us, in Christ's name.

Heroic Witness

The second death was one that had happened a month before. Rosie Grimm was a member of the Class of 2010. She died of cancer, surrounded by her family, minutes after concluding the Rosary. I read that the chaplain of the College at the time said that it was the most beautiful and peaceful death he had ever seen. I don't believe I ever met Rosie, and if



Rosie Grimm ('10)

I did, it was probably as a member of a vast herd of Grimms that periodically stampeded through campus during their seasonal migrations. Rosie's Mass of Christian Burial had been offered here, I suspect, and a few of the memorial prayer cards with her picture on it remained on a table near the Chapel doors. I picked one up and read the following words:

Does our life become from day to day more painful, more oppressive, more replete with afflictions? Blessed be He a thousand times who desires it so. If life be harder, love makes it also stronger, and only this love, grounded on suffering, can carry the Cross of my Lord Jesus Christ. Love without egotism, without relying on self, but enkindling in the depth of the heart an ardent thirst to love and suffer for all those around us: a thirst that neither misfortune nor contempt can extinguish ...

There suddenly appeared, clear in my mind's eye, the image of a young woman, mute with pain, and clutching this prayer with the arms of her soul, serving her as a staff in her agony.

It was a prayer written by Bl. Miguel Agustin Pro, taken from one of his many letters. I placed the card in my breviary, little knowing that this was the beginning of a long friendship with this dashing and daring martyr priest.

If you are not familiar with the life of Fr. Pro, allow me to share this brief excerpt from a book Graham Greene wrote about his travels in Mexico not long after the revolution:

In July 1926, Father Miguel Pro landed at Veracruz. He was twenty-five years old and a Jesuit. ... Within two months of Pro's landing, President Calles had begun the fiercest persecution of religion anywhere since the reign of Elizabeth. The churches were closed, Mass had to be said secretly in private houses, to administer the Sacraments was a

serious offence. Nevertheless, Pro gave Communion daily to some 300 people, confessions were heard in half-built houses in darkness, retreats were held in garages. Pro escaped the plain-clothes police again and again. Once he found them at the entrance to a house where he was supposed to say Mass; he posed as a police officer, showing an imaginary badge and remarking, “There's a cat bagged in here,” and passed into the house and out again with his cassock under his arm. Followed by detectives when he left a Catholic house and with only fifty yards' start, he disappeared altogether from their sight round a corner — the only man they overtook was a lover out with

“Today marks a turning point in which you must bear this Spirit of truth into the disorienting maze of the world.”

his girl. The prisons were filling up, priests were being shot, yet on three successive first Fridays Pro gave the Sacrament to nine hundred, thirteen hundred, and fifteen hundred people.

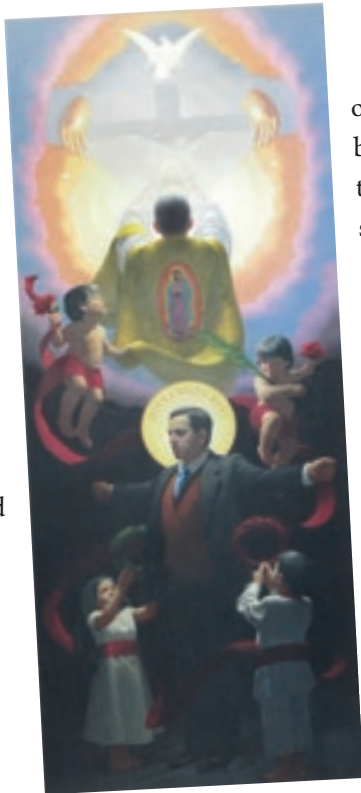
This is the stuff of legend. This is the stuff of the most excessive hagiography. How could the biography of one priest read like it was cobbled together from fragments of *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, the Acts of the Apostles, and *Jeeves and Wooster*? But this is no legend. Fr. Pro was executed without trial by the Mexican authorities. I have read somewhere that his was the first martyrdom in history to be photographed.

In fact, this photographic record led to a marvelous twist in the story. Because of those famous photographs, the most imme-

diate and temporal fruit of Fr. Pro's life was after his death. The publication of the image of his final moments, his arms outstretched and the words, "Long live Christ the King" gentle on his lips, served only to galvanize popular resistance against the anticlerical and atheistic governing class. It was a profound miscalculation on their part to publish it as a demonstration of their firmness.

Many who had been deceived about the true nature of the revolution, or who had made a cowardly peace with it, were deceived and were mute no longer. The faithful turned out by the thousands to escort his remains to the cemetery, where they wept as Pro's father threw the first spade of soil upon his bullet-ridden body. The tide of the struggle turned; the president was soon in exile, he who had sent so many to their deaths and who had desecrated the holy sanctuaries of religion with hatred and blasphemy.

All this was more or less unknown to me at the time. Years later, I found myself in a dark wood, as it were, grieved by the sorry state of the Church, which seemed to grow at



A prayer card of Bl. Miguel Agustín Pro, copies of which Fr. Blaha gave to the members of the Class of 2022

once more craven and more timid by the hour. I grieved the betrayals that have stained and wounded so many, and the oppression of disillusionment pressed me into mediocrity and lukewarmness. It was as if as the lights that were to brighten the darkness of this present age were winking out around me, one by one. It was then that that little prayer card of Rosie Grimm's inside my breviary made its way before my eyes again, and I discovered that the need of my soul was for a hero: a steady light that could not be obscured.

And in Fr. Pro, I felt the fresh breeze of the Lord's breath, what He Himself promised as "the truth-giving spirit, for

whom the world can find no room, because it cannot see Him, cannot recognize Him" (Jn. 14:17).

Fr. Pro has become a waypoint of what the Gospel calls the truth-giving Spirit. He became that for Rosie as well, under far more dire conditions.

And so I thought it fitting on this occasion to present you with the little gift that you found in your seats, an image of Fr. Pro with the words of the prayer that gave supernatural purpose to the suffering of a young woman, and to a young priest, hope.



From Ronald, to Rosie, to Miguel

Many of you are set on your path, with your next steps in God's service confidently discerned. Others have yet to settle on what the "anything" refers to in the phrase "you can do anything with a liberal arts education." Some of you will continue your studies, some will enter religious formation, and if this class is anything like mine was, some will be married before the year is out, and not a few of you to each other. Your most sincere and disciplined efforts to be faithful, to be just, to be innocent will provoke your enemy. Let him strike.

"Your most sincere and disciplined efforts to be faithful, to be just, to be innocent will provoke your enemy. Let him strike."

And against that day, wind around your finger this little thread that has been spun, a thread that runs from Ronald, to Rosie, to Miguel: that when the Master Weaver has need of you in His handiwork, you will not miss the tug that assigns you to your place within that matchless fabric. And then, in whatever way it is being asked of you, stretch out your arms, profess your loyalty to His reign, and say then as we say together now:

I believe, O Lord; but strengthen my faith ...
Heart of Jesus, I love Thee; but increase my love.
Heart of Jesus, I trust in Thee; but give greater vigor to my confidence.
Heart of Jesus, I give my heart to Thee; but so enclose it in Thee that it may never be separated from Thee.
Heart of Jesus, I am all Thine; but take care of my promise so that I may be able to put it in practice even unto the complete sacrifice of my life.
Amen. ❖

CLASS SPEAKER

"The Education Here Aims to Renew Our Minds"

by Jordan Raum ('22)

First off, I would like to say a few things on behalf of the Class of 2022. I would like to extend a warm welcome to everyone with us today to celebrate the completion of our wonderful time here. You belong here beside us, not only because of the great love we have for each of you, but because this education has always been a joint endeavor.

Today, we do not just celebrate an achievement of this class, but an achievement of the whole community that makes this education possible. So we would like to express our gratitude to all the benefactors of the College, whose generosity has nourished and sheltered us; to the Board of Governors, whose prudence and dedication have allowed us to faithfully fulfill the vision for Catholic liberal education outlined by our founders; to



The Class of 2022 elected Jordan Raum as its Class Speaker ...

"Liberal education is freeing because it seeks to provide real answers to the questions none of us can escape answering in one way or another."

our president, Dr. McLean; our dean, Dr. Goyette; and our assistant dean, Dr. Kuebler, whose willingness to descend back into the cave has ensured the success of this program, especially during the great difficulties of the pandemic; to the administration, whose diligence has kept

the lights on all these years; to the tutors, whose patience, humility, and love for the truth have inspired all of us; and, most of all, to our parents and families, whose constant love has given us life time and time again. By working constantly beside us, you all have blessed us in more ways than anyone but God knows.

With that said, I hope you will forgive me if I ignore you and address the rest of these words to my classmates.

A Tall Task

I can only assume you asked me to be Class Speaker because none of you wanted to be up here today. However it happened, I ended up with the responsibility of reminding everyone what a huge difference this program has made in our lives and inspiring us all to go out and make a difference in the world. So I owe it to you to tell you up front that I can't fulfill that responsibility.

I've given a lot of thought to how I could encapsulate what we have gained from the last four years, but you all have

poured too much blood, sweat, and tears into this program for me to bottle it up and serve it back to you in a martini glass. I simply can't speak to all of the ways this community has blessed each and every one of us: There are too many of you, and you have experienced too much.

Even if we all came up here one by one and poured out our whole hearts, I still don't think we could adequately express how these years have impacted us. We really haven't had enough time to reap the rewards of our labors

here, and I suspect the experience of the coming years will never fail to deepen our awareness and appreciation of what this college and community have done for us. So don't be disappointed if this address can't sufficiently capture what being here has meant to each of you.

I have also thought about how I could inspire us to go out and make the most of what we have been blessed with here, but I can't even begin to imagine the countless ways God is going to use each of us, or to discern which parts of our life here have been most pivotal in preparing us for those missions. So please don't be too dissatisfied if I can't do justice to the importance of what each of you is called to accomplish, or remind you how you are now more than capable of overcoming every challenge that will confront you.

Life in Abundance

Since I have failed you as a class speaker, I thought perhaps I could make it up to you by sharing a few thoughts of mine as a friend.

Regardless of where your steps off this platform and into the future will take you, there is one thing I know for certain about every one of you: You are going to try to be happy. You will attempt to live the kind of life where you can go to sleep each night without wishing that you won't wake up.

Don't forget that this education is training for happiness. Liberal education is freeing because it seeks to provide real answers to the questions none of us can escape answering in one way or another: Why are you here, and what are you supposed to do about it? These questions are timeless because they must be answered, often before they can even be



... siblings Anna and Robert Santine to sing the National Anthem...

asked. Every choice you make declares why you think you are here and what you think you can do about it. Your life is always an answer, so if you want a good life, make it a good one. The purpose of our time here was to teach us how to find the answer which leads to life in abundance.

But, as you all are especially aware, the truth is not easy to attain. Thinking can be an exhausting, frustrating, and frankly humiliating business. This is one of the many reasons it can be tempting to just walk away, as Euthyphro does from Socrates.

When the events of life demand that we take a position, we always have the option of responding with someone else's answers. I am confident that you will never find a shortage of people more than willing to tell you what to live for, and plenty of others who will accept you warmly and defend you fiercely just for agreeing

with them. So of course it can be appealing to think and act in a way which will be agreeable to those around you, while distracting yourself from the weight of those fundamental questions by whatever means necessary. It might even feel that by doing so you are only being a harmless and agreeable person. But harmless and agreeable people executed Socrates; harmless and agreeable people went to church beside the rails to Auschwitz; harmless and agreeable people make possible abortion and the grave social injustices of our day. As Jesus put it, "Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for so did their fathers to the false prophets" (Luke 6:26). So you can't give up on thinking; humanity has seen enough unexamined lives. As Paul says, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Romans 12:2).

Renewal

The education here aims to renew our minds. Our minds become new by asking the crucial questions with true humility and wonder, evicting our personal presumptions and biases to make room for the truth to work in us.

By starting anew with serious and diligent effort, we have had the unbelievably wonderful opportunity to learn the habits of mind and foundational principles necessary for truly intentional living. We have pushed ourselves to wrestle with the biggest questions and the greatest minds our civilization has produced. From where I am standing I can tell it has been well worth the effort.



... and Orion LaCour to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

I think the Senior Thesis project best illustrates what this program has equipped us to do: We confronted real questions of lasting importance and significance with dedication, humility, and courage, then defended the answers that we discovered. Could you ask for a better description of the examined life? I don't think so.

But even more importantly, we have had an opportunity to greatly increase our appreciation for Christ Himself. Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life; but how can we understand the significance of this if we have never seriously struggled with our own responsibility to discover the way by which truth can direct our lives?

You can't take Christ for granted. You have to want Him more than anything else. You have to long for Him as badly as a deer pants for water. That's why He says, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness" (Matthew 5:6), because they are the only ones who are going to be satisfied. So our attempts to grapple with life's deepest questions continually renew our thirst for life's deepest answer.

Let the Truth Set You Free

There will be many things from our time here that we won't always remember. Some of us will probably forget how to compound ratios; others will have trouble recalling who the Atreidae are; and it's not impossible that, God forbid, one of us will even attempt to employ a second-figure affirmative syllogism. But we must never forget that thinking is a great gift and a great responsibility. Our time here has shown us that it is also a great joy, a source of profound fulfillment, and a powerful avenue to Christ.

So don't be conformed to the world. Continue to renew yourselves on the path we began four years ago, and let the truth set you free. Or, as one of our contemporary poets recently put it: "No more living for the culture, we're nobody's slaves."

Thank you, guys, so much for making these last four years the best of my life and giving me so much hope for everything to come. God bless you all. ♦

The California 2022 Commencement Address

Take Up the Vocation of the Catholic Intellectual Life

by Carl A. Anderson

Former Supreme Knight of the Knights of Columbus

I am most grateful for the invitation to be with you today. Fifty years ago, my wife and I were like you: graduating after having completed a "Great Books" program at our university. Although our experience was in many ways different from your experience, we have always felt close to Thomas Aquinas College and so we are very glad to be with you, especially this year as you celebrate your 50th anniversary. I have had a varied career in government, academia, business, charity, and civil society. During all that time, no educational experience has served me better than has that multi-year study of those Great Books. Time and again I have turned to them for wisdom and insight — and, most importantly, to better understand the significance of current events.

Let no one tell you that your college experience here was not relevant. Throughout my life I have found such education to be the most relevant. The world will tell you that what is most important in your life is what you have. But you know that what is most important is who you are. Because wherever you go and whatever you do, the most important value proposition you can bring to any situation is you. Of course, technical and professional skills are important, but what is more important is your judgment, your wisdom, your compassion, and your integrity.

Advances in artificial intelligence will continue to make great improvements in the work environment. But artificial intelligence will never replace what is in your heart and soul.

We commonly refer to studies such as that at TAC as a Great Books program, but here it is more than that. I think of it as an encounter with the genius of the West. That genius has taken many



"Your achievement now sets you apart from virtually every other college graduate in America."

forms in many different disciplines, and its diversity is like nothing else in the world.

We may look at this from many different perspectives, but in a fundamental sense, it is the working out through history of the meeting of Jerusalem, Athens, and Rome. As you know well, this development reached a profound unity in the 12th and 13th centuries. Even more fundamentally, we may see this in the context of salvation history as the encounter of this genius with the reality of the Incarnation. As you know, this process continues. With the help of an outstanding faculty, you have been part of it. Your achievement now sets you apart from virtually every other college graduate in America.

Thomas Aquinas College has been a great gift to you made possible by the sacrifice of your families, the dedication of the faculty, and the vision of those who built and now sustain this beautiful campus and academic program. Yet the value of any gift also depends on how it is received. You have not only embraced this gift, but you have worked hard to develop it. Today, we are justly proud of all you have achieved.

Life of Learning

Now, as you graduate, with this gift comes a great task. This task is one that you have already begun. It is what I would call the vocation of the Catholic intellectual life. In addition to what the Lord may be calling you to do — for example, a vocation to the priesthood or religious life or to marriage and family life — you now have the opportunity to continue a life of learning in a special Catholic way.

We often speak of our church as a pilgrim church. This idea

reflects the reality that our life of Catholic faith is not something we possess, but rather is something toward which we continually strive — and not only on our own but as part of a community. We are all on a life’s journey, and for some of us an intellectual pilgrimage is an important part of that journey.

You are here today because during the past four years you have made a serious commitment to the scholarly life — a life of intellectual curiosity, critical thinking, and discipline. It is to be hoped that this work has not exhausted your wonder at the world which the Lord has given us and the human drama that has been our history in it. The intellectual life is very much part of the identity of many who have taken up the religious life, as we see in the Domin-

“St. Thomas Aquinas is rightly celebrated as the outstanding model of the Catholic intellectual life. He truly embodies this vocation.”

icans and the Benedictines. Their communities embody a Catholic culture of learning. Their legacy is part of the great patrimony of our church. Yet there is no reason why lay men and women should not also embrace a life of learning and create a culture of learning.

You have been given an opportunity that few other Catholics in the world have been given. You have begun an intellectual pilgrimage grounded in some of the greatest works of Christianity — the classic texts of our faith — with a unique scholarly community. Today should mark a continuation, not an ending, of this chapter in your life.

Today, our church needs more of us to take up the special task of defending the truths of our faith. Certainly, at the institutional level there are offices in the Church such as that of bishop and theologian as well as academic faculties that have responsibility for safeguarding and communicating the truths of our faith. But there is no reason why a new generation of lay men and women who do not hold such positions should not also take up this task and in their own way share in this mission. Some might even say the times demand it.

Look to Thomas

I would suggest that you look closely at the scholar for whom this institution is named. St. Thomas Aquinas is rightly celebrated as the outstanding model of the Catholic intellectual life. He truly embodies this vocation, which is to say, a life caught up in the love of learning and the desire for God. He lived a life of uncompromising and dispassionate discipline in the search for truth. And he complemented that discipline with a serene confidence, humil-

ity, and charity in its application. He showed us that the Catholic intellectual has a sacred call, and in response to it he or she must practice the virtues of the Catholic life — and especially those at the center of this life — the virtues of charity and humility. It is a vocation that we could say begins with these words of St. Thomas: “All that is true, by whomsoever it has been said, has its origin in the Holy Spirit” (*Omne verum, a quocumque dicitur, a Spiritu Sancto est*).

Thus, we begin in a spirit of humility, both as to what we may learn from others as well as what we may ourselves contribute. The Catholic intellectual does not stand alone. Rather, he or she is always a member of a community that extends through time — a community that is entrusted with understanding and preserving a great inheritance. It is an inheritance which arises from the very heart of the Church and, like the mission of the Church itself, is intended to bring the reality of the Incarnation ever more deeply into the life of the intellect and thus into the life of the believer.

During your studies the greatest book you have opened is you — and it is in this book that the Lord has been writing during your time here. No study program, no matter how great, can substitute for what He has written in your heart. St. Thomas lived in an age when reading and study were closely associated with prayer. A familiar adage of the time was: “You should apply yourself to prayer or to reading: at times you speak with God, at times He speaks with you.”

The vocation of the Catholic intellectual life goes beyond learning the Christian classics. It is not about seeking knowledge for the sake of knowledge or for the sake of power. Instead, it is about entrusting oneself to the Spirit of truth.

I have suggested this is a vocation that proceeds from the inseparable connection between the love of learning and the desire for God. But ultimately this vocation moves us beyond this to a



unity of the love of learning with the love of God. It sets our spirit in the one direction that Pope St. John Paul II told us is the only direction for our intellect, will, and heart, and that direction is toward Christ.

Thus, a disciplined life of prayer as well as that of reading Sacred Scripture are irreplaceable elements of an authentic Catholic intellectual life. Here, as well, St. Thomas Aquinas serves as our sure guide to the sum and summit of the Catholic intellectual life. There is a story told about him that, as his death was approaching, he heard the Lord say: “You have spoken well of Me, Thomas, what reward would you like?” To which he replied, “Nothing but Yourself, Lord.”

A Special Responsibility

It has been said that not every age is as good as every other, but there is one age that for us surpasses them all, and that one is our own. I need not tell you the challenges which our society presents to those who would faithfully follow Jesus Christ. Some of the most painful examples of those challenges are here in California, where agents of the cancel culture have defaced our churches and torn down statues of saints such as Junipero Serra.

Contemporary culture challenges every believer, but few are better prepared to respond to these challenges than are you. Because, in order to defend a culture from those who would cancel it, you must first know it. And few know the achievement of Western genius and the culture which it has produced better than you. Culture is a shorthand way of speaking about what we mean by the way of life of a people: their ideas, their aspirations, their spiritual values, and what they have sacrificed over generations to achieve and why they have done so. Those who take up the vocation of the Catholic intellectual life have a special responsibility in this regard.

The Thomistic scholar Etienne Gilson often recounted his experience as a soldier in the French army during the First World War and especially the time a dying French soldier begged him to hear his confession. Because of such experiences, Gilson could easily

have joined those who, disillusioned after the Great War, became members of the so-called “Lost Generation.”

Instead, Gilson and other Catholic philosophers went in a different direction. They took up the challenge presented by Pope Leo XIII in *Aeterni Patris*. They agreed with this great pope on the importance of St. Thomas Aquinas, and they led a rebirth in Thomistic studies. Undoubtedly, at the time, some questioned the relevance of their attention to medieval philosophy. Yet, as we know, no work could have been more relevant to the crisis of the West than the recovery of the great intellectual genius and spirituality of our Catholic faith.

These scholars lived in an intellectual culture which, since the Enlightenment, had put the God of Christianity on trial, and which had found His church guilty of a long list of falsehoods. Rousseau, Voltaire, Diderot, the geniuses of the French Enlightenment, positioned their attack on Christianity as a debate between reason and superstition. They were astute enough in championing the Age of Reason to avoid directly confronting the sublime genius of Christian reason found in the work of the Angelic Doctor.

Their strategy was effective, if cowardly — simply ignore the work of St. Thomas Aquinas and move on. But their Age of Reason was only a half-way point. By relying upon an intelligible universe and a rational creator, the Age of Reason ended up pointing the 19th century in one of two directions: once again toward the rational faith of Christianity, or alternatively toward the new anti-faith of atheism.

Pope Leo XIII saw the choice more clearly than most and he sought to build a new confidence in Christian philosophy: first by emphasizing the importance of St. Thomas in *Aeterni Patris* (1879), and then by showing the relevance of such reasoning in finding solutions to the social crises of the day in his great economic encyclical, *Rerum Novarum* (1891).

“Contemporary culture challenges every believer, but few are better prepared to respond to these challenges than are you.”

But by this time the philosophical turn toward atheism was well under way. The new attack on Christianity was no longer presented as a confrontation between reason and superstition. Instead, Christianity was said to have created something far more sinister — it had created an entirely false consciousness in the mind of the believer. The fathers of modern atheism — Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud — each in their own way sought to dismantle what they said was the false consciousness of Christianity. Whether in the areas

of history and economics, freedom and autonomy, or psycho-analysis and science, they sought to “wake up” society with a new narrative of reality.

The problem for them was not that people have wrong ideas that must be corrected, but that people have an entirely wrong way of looking at reality that must be replaced. That is what they really mean when they describe Christianity as “the opium of the people,” or as “a slave religion” or as a “neurosis” — and it is precisely this false consciousness that prevents society from obtaining economic justice, personal autonomy, and individual happiness.

Seek Wisdom

You may judge for yourself the extent to which this thinking has seeped into the groundwater of America’s culture. But to the extent that it has, more of our fellow citizens live as though God does not exist. They live their lives in a closed-in materialist world — a world with no transcendent horizon. While much here is new, one thing hasn’t changed. Being newly “woke” means feeling no need to climb the heights of Christian philosophy with St. Thomas Aquinas, since that philosophy has meaning only within the false consciousness of the Christian.

It seems to me we have once again a problem like that described by Plato in his allegory of the cave. But this time with a modern twist. We have people locked in the cave of a materialist world unable or unwilling to turn to the light. They see only the shadows of a secular culture passing in front of them and they call it reality. And this reality is increasingly one of indifference, isolation, and despair.



How, then, are we to encourage people to escape their cave, to turn and face the light? Our problem is even more difficult than Plato’s. In *The Republic*, Plato is in dialogue with people for whom the soul, the good, the true, the right, and the beautiful have meaning. His readers contemplate an intelligible world with truths that can be discovered by human reason. Not so today. Many of those around us do not share these ideas. Nor do they have con-

fidence in the intelligibility of the world and in the reliability of human reason.

So, what is to be done? How are we to encourage people to turn away from the shadows of doubt and suspicion and to step out into the light of Christian faith?

St. John Paul II spoke directly to this problem throughout his pontificate. Listen to what he writes in his first encyclical, *Redemptor Hominis*: “The Church’s fundamental function in every age and particularly in ours is to direct man’s gaze, to point the awareness

“How are we to encourage people to turn away from the shadows of doubt and suspicion and to step out into the light of Christian faith?”

and experience of the whole of humanity towards the mystery of God, to help all men to be familiar with the profundity of the Redemption taking place in Christ.”

It seems to me that “to direct man’s gaze” to the redemption taking place now in the world is to supplement the reasoning of philosophy and theology with the experience of God acting in the lives of believers. It is to point to the way in which redemption is happening today in the concrete reality of our lives as Christians. In other words, what it means to us is that Christ is our Redeemer. As St. Peter advises us, “sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts (and) always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope” (1 Peter 3:15).

The witness of redemption is the great drama of Christianity in every age. In this sense we may even say that every age is a Christian age. This is true because in every age the Lord is alive and acting through the lives of His followers, and therefore every age is an age of Christian witness. Your age will be so because of your witness.

Here the Catholic intellectual finds his or her greatest responsibility — the responsibility of serving divine truth through a life of Christian witness. St. John Paul II tells us: “Being responsible for that truth also means loving it and seeking the most exact understanding of it, in order to bring it closer to ourselves and all its saving power, its splendor, and its profundity.”

Etienne Gilson once said of St. Thomas Aquinas, “Wisdom, to him, was not philosophy; it was not even theology; in its only perfect form, wisdom was Christ.” If you commit your lives to seeking this Wisdom, as did St. Thomas, then you will be those witnesses that our time requires and that the Lord is calling you to be. ❖

SENIOR REFLECTION

Learning to Learn at Wizard School
by Brandon Wang (’22)

“Jesus camp,” “the medieval monastery in the mountains,” “the wizard school with a major in eccentricity.” This was how I felt about Thomas Aquinas College in high school.

Fortunately for me, through the efforts of teachers, friends, family, and the College admissions staff, I became more open to going. Visiting the campus, talking to the students, and sitting in on classes helped to change my impression of Thomas Aquinas College as an unprofitable and crazy school to something better. I started to realize that the kind of profitability I was looking for in higher education shouldn’t be financial, but intellectual, and that maybe the College looked crazy because it was trying to pursue something beyond teaching students how to do x or y as a job, but rather teaching students what and how to learn. This is what I began to see, and I wanted it.

“Were the people weird?
Would I get along with them?
I was afraid that as a non-Catholic, I wouldn’t fit in with everyone and that I would have no friends.”

Still, I wondered, were the people weird? Would I get along with them? I was afraid that as a non-Catholic, I wouldn’t fit in with everyone and that I would have no friends.

The High School Summer Program helped me see that I wouldn’t have a problem. People were different, for sure, but different in a good way. They weren’t perfect, but they cared about being good.

It didn’t mean they were prudes, however; in fact, many of the funniest and easy-going people I have met are from this college. Having come to the end of my four years here, I realize that I have made lifelong friends and teachers here who have helped form me morally and intellectually — and who will continue to do so for the rest of my life.

There were three main formative takeaways for which I have to thank the College. First, a moral one: The College, through its rules and the culture it maintains, has taught me that it is important to order your daily life to the life of the mind. What does that mean, precisely? Go to sleep at a reasonable time. Have a consistent meal schedule. Don’t spend too much time playing video games and watching television. These may sound laughably obvious, but it’s harder than it seems to implement them into one’s life. That the College provided me with ways to structure my day to the end of study has helped me to learn how to do it, and to appreciate the fruits it bears on the quest for wisdom.

Second, the College has helped me with one major aspect of intellectual formation: learning that knowing is possible and desirable. Possible because there is a swarm of things to know out there, and it’s hard to stay oriented toward what to know and how to do it well. Should I just pick up a textbook on biochemistry, or should I start with physics? Should I assume what the book assumes or should I question that as well? The College has helped me remain oriented by teaching me that there is an order among the sciences and that there is a proper method by which we learn.

Additionally, Thomas Aquinas Col-



lege has helped me to trust my intuitive experiences. It’s a temptation I see in the world, especially in more abstract fields of knowledge, for someone to jump quickly away from common sense and experience to sophisticated and complicated answers. The College has taught me that we must start with what we know first in order to better explain it, even if we must use more abstract and complicated notions to do so.

The College has also taught me that it is eminently desirable by reminding us what kind of animals we are — rational animals. It is our particular privilege here in this big, wide world to think and to know. By helping me to see that it is possible to know, and helping me to start grasping little truths like how the interior angles of a triangle sum up to two right angles — or that there are four ways to answer the question “Why?” — I’ve grown more confident in my ability to know and to enjoy knowing and coming to know.

Finally, the College taught me that, although I might know (or think I know) certain truths, I have not even scratched the surface and probably never will. Truth is possible — to an extent — and I shouldn’t be so arrogant as to think I can know everything this world has to offer, nor claim to even know perfectly the things I might think I know.

I will continue to know and wonder for the rest of my life, thanks to Thomas Aquinas College, that wizard school in the mountains. ❖

This Community of Philosophers

by Mary Pipes ('22)

In light of my graduation, I have been seriously reflecting on how I came to find the College, what I expected from it, and what I actually have ended up with after these four years.

My four older sisters all graduated from here. I visited many times, and my sisters told me so much about their experiences. I felt that I knew everything the school had to offer. I was excited to receive this highly praised education that I had been promised, and after studying liberal arts in high school, this was the

natural continuation of my education. I expected to be open to new thoughts and ideas about the truth; to learn to exercise good judgment about arguments; to learn to speak and write eloquently; and, as I was told so many times, to learn how to think.

But I wasn't expecting the great personal impact that this place has had on me — through the people, the tutors and the students, especially. It is this community of philosophers, seeking truth together, that has had the greatest impact.

Our last Senior Seminar reading was Plato's *Phaedrus*, in which Socrates considers that written words have no life of their own; they are a thought, frozen in time, without the ability to grow as thoughts can. I have realized that while the Great Books are definitely what make Thomas Aquinas College unique, these writings would be frozen and lifeless without the discussions we have, which give them life in our minds.

These discussions, Socrates says, are at the heart of knowledge. They are what



give life to the seed of truth locked in the writing, and what set our minds on fire. The discussions that we have here, in this community of philosophers, are what really set TAC apart.

It's hard to exaggerate how four years of being a dedicated philosopher can change someone, especially four years early in one's life. Confidence in judgments; the desire and ability to lead others; courage in questioning; a deeper spirituality and sense of the meaning of life; a love of truth and honesty; and a higher desire to know: these are a few of the ways in which this education has changed me. I know that these strengths and skills that I have found, and the knowledge I have learned here, will continue to affect my life and the work that I do.

After graduation I will be working at the Alvarez law firm in Camarillo, California, as its marketing and events coordinator. I am excited to start this job, and I know that I am more than ready, thanks to everything that TAC has offered me.

Thank you so much for all that you have done to make these four years at Thomas Aquinas College possible for me, and thank you on behalf of all the students here.

May God bless you. ❖

Note: The above essay is adapted from remarks made to the Thomas Aquinas College Board of Governors on May 13, 2022.



“No One Wants Fake Love. Everyone Wants the Real Thing.”

An Interview with Carl A. Anderson
Past Supreme Knight, Knights of Columbus

You have lived an extraordinarily active life, yet you have kept up a serious intellectual life as well. How have you accomplished that?

Well, I think you must embrace a culture of learning. T. S. Eliot, in his famous essay, “Notes Toward a Definition of Culture,” talked about the culture of an individual, the culture of the group, the culture of a society. Most people don't think of themselves as having a culture, but I think it is worth keeping in mind that you really do create your own culture from what's important in your life. Eliot also makes the interesting point with Christopher Dawson that religion is a way of life and that there is this real connection between culture and religion. So, I think if you want to be an active Christian who's deepening his faith and moving beyond the surface, you should make it part of your life to read the Scriptures, the teachings of the papal magisterium and of the Fathers of the Church, and the works of spiritual writers.

For a married person would there then be a culture of the family?

Yes, I would say so. Pope St. John Paul II talks about a communion of persons within the family, which, of course, for him, is modeled on the Trinity. So, I think you do have a culture in every family, whether it is consciously intended or whether it is haphazard. I think a Christian needs to be intentional



“A Christian needs to be intentional about family, that it has a particular culture, guided by certain principles.”

about family, that it has a particular culture, guided by certain principles.

For somebody who comes from the experience of Thomas Aquinas College, intellectual life would be a big part of that, along with art and music — the classical Greek idea of developing the whole person. That gives the spouses a common vision for their family life. That doesn't mean to say you can't have a good marriage without that, but if you have the blessing of a common vision, it makes everything so much easier. Then, when you hit those bumps in the road, it makes that easier as well. And it gives

your children more solidity within the family, and more unity for the whole family.

What attracted you to the Knights of Columbus originally, and what sustained you in all your years of work for it?

When I worked in the White House for Ronald Reagan, I spent the first two years doing policy, working on things like the Mexico City Policy. Then, for the next two years I was in the Office of Public Liaison, which handled

meetings with the President — events he would attend and speak at — and I got the Christian part of that portfolio. President Reagan was very big on the idea of subsidiarity, though he called it the “New Federalism.” The idea was that the private sector, volunteer organizations, as well as state and local governments were really the strength of the country. So, in public liaison I worked with Evangelical Christians and Catholics, and I began to work with the Knights of Columbus.

What I saw was a great organization, which has 2 million-plus men doing what de Tocqueville talked about in *Democracy in America*: an association of men who strengthen their communities — they're pro-life and pro-family; they do a lot to support the Church, to support vocations and seminaries; they try to be the strong right arm of the Church.

So, when I was coming to the end of my

work at the White House, the Supreme Knight asked me to come and work for the Knights, which I did. I first set up a Washington, D.C., policy office for the Knights in 1987, and then we opened the Pontifical John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family. We proposed to Pope John Paul II that the Knights would finance and administer a U. S. branch of his institute in Rome in order to make this program more available to students in North America. Over the years it became a unique relationship between the Knights and the Vatican.

Do you still serve as vice president of the Institute?

Yes. Our degrees include a Master of Theological Study, a Licentiate in Sacred Theology, and a Doctor of Philosophy in Theology, specializing in marriage and family and guided by the Trinitarian anthropology of John Paul II. We have approximately 650 graduates now — a fine achievement for such a specialized program. I think someone who really wants to continue studying St. Thomas should consider the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, D.C. But for someone who wants to enter into the theology of John Paul II and the theology of Benedict XVI in a profound way, the Institute is a very good place to do that.

Can you say how the thought of Pope St. John Paul II differs from that of St. Thomas?

I wouldn't say they were opposed, but I think John Paul II sees a different problem than St. Thomas. Think of Plato's "Allegory of the Cave" in *The Republic*, where people imprisoned there see only shadows and never see the reality that exists outside the cave in the sunlight. If someone has already turned from "the cave," and now sees reality in the light of Christian faith, then studying St. Thomas is a fantastic way of understanding reality.

I think that John Paul II's concern is with the person who has not yet made that turn and how to get him to do so. I think that is why he places such an emphasis on the experiential and why his theology of love and of

the body is so powerful. I don't think he offered his theology to replace the theology of St. Thomas but to reach people who would never read St. Thomas.

For much of his life John Paul II was concerned with a Catholic Church and culture under assault by totalitarians, by the Nazis and the Communists. He fashioned a response in such a way that people would understand it was a refutation — people who had no awareness of Aristotle or St. Thomas, nor of their principles.

So where to start that conversation? John Paul II saw the family as an icon of the Trinity, and so one could really understand, from his way of thinking, every human situation by understanding the Trinitarian nature of the relationships within marriage and family. If you look at *Familiaris Consortio* and *Redemptor Hominis*, what emerges is the idea that the person is created out of love, for love, and his life is meaningless and unfulfilled without love. No matter what their worldview, people are looking for true love. And who is the Master of love, the love that is not compromised, the love that is not conditioned, the love that is faithful to the end? Here is where John Paul II begins his



"The person is created out of love, for love, and his life is meaningless and unfulfilled without love."

encounter with secular society.

One of the tenets of a good communication strategy is that if you want to get people to change their thinking, the first thing you have to do is get them to stop and listen to you, even for just a minute. They may not fully agree, but maybe there is a little crack in the solidity of their position, and they begin thinking. But how do you get them to just take a moment and listen? I think John Paul II's theology of love is a way to begin that discussion, since everyone wants a love that is authentic. No one wants fake love. Everyone wants the real thing.

The Knights of Columbus are a little unusual in the way they work through the parish system throughout the country. How did that come about, and how did they become so successful at it?

We started off with what we called "home associations," which were like clubhouses and, in fact, a lot like the YMCA. We gradually moved away from that approach 60 years ago or so, focusing instead on parish-based councils. Integrating more into parish life worked really well for us. For one thing, the Knights have a gradual formation program which revolves around works of charity, the Holy Eucharist, Marian devotion, a sense of brotherhood within the organization, and solidarity with priests. It is an organization in which laymen are the officers while priests are chaplains. Priests who wish to promote greater charitable efforts and Eucharistic and Marian devotion within their parishes have a ready-made organization in the Knights of Columbus. So, we're very easy to integrate into parishes. If the pastor changes and a new one comes in with a different spirituality or different pastoral initiatives, the Knights' council is there to help him as well. We don't ask that he change his initiatives to be a member.

One of the things I think that was important about the Second Vatican Council is that it recognized that the laity have a proper role to play and there is — to the extent that anything is autonomous within the Church — a certain autonomy to the laity's responsibility to go and renew society. So, when we

as Knights do pro-life and pro-family work, or when we support vocations, we're helping the bishop on a particular issue, not because he controls the organization, but because that is what the laity should be doing. Catholic laymen shouldn't need to be told by the bishop to be pro-life. Serious, sincere Catholics, well-formed Catholics, should be pro-life. Mature laymen should understand what their responsibility is in a society. That is the propelling dynamic in the Knights of Columbus, and I think it is very much the intention of the Second Vatican Council.

Could you explain how religion has been sidelined in the modern public square and what can be done to reinstate it?

Alexis de Tocqueville makes the prediction in *Democracy in America* that at some point America will either be a secular country or a Catholic country. At the moment, it may look like we're leaning more toward the former, but I think the founders understood, whether they were Anglicans or Baptists or Congregationalists or Deists, that there was a Creator, and that man had a responsibility to find out who that Creator was and to have a relationship with Him that was correct. That is why religious liberty was the first liberty specified in the First Amendment. It was central to all of them — Jefferson, Adams, Washington, and especially Charles Carroll. Religious freedom was fundamental to the country and an important part of public life.

But if, as too many now think, religion is simply a narrative that gives some people meaning in their lives, who wants to protect a narrative that's a bad narrative? If you think religion is the opium of the people, as did Marx, why protect it? Why give it a privileged place? If Christianity is a slave religion that destroys personal freedom, as Nietzsche thought, do you really want to give that a protected position in society?

Or what if you think it's a neurosis or a mental illness, as Freud maintained? If that's your view of religion, then expansive First Amendment protection really goes out the window because no ethical, rational society wants opium-pushers, slaveholders, neurotics, or crazy people influencing its country. I



"Sometimes we emphasize too much our rights in a way that suggests we are only concerned about our own self-interest."

think there are strong tendencies moving in that direction, and we need to counter them.

One way of doing so is to stop being hesitant to talk about what value we bring to society as Christians. I think sometimes we emphasize too much our rights in a way that suggests we are only concerned about our own self-interest. Certainly, we have rights which we must be vigilant to protect. But people protect what they value, and we must do a better job witnessing to the value we bring to society.

People ask about the Knights of Columbus, and I say, do you think we have enough charity in society? Do you think we have enough unity? Do you think we have enough brotherhood? Do you think we have enough people encouraging reconciliation and forgiveness, who are willing to lend a helping hand to a neighbor in need? Do you think we have enough of that in our society? Well, who brings those values into society if not Christians? When that madman went into the African-American church in Charleston and killed all those people, the congregation got up and forgave him. The family members whose father, mother, son, or daughter were murdered said, "We forgive you." That's the kind of value that Christianity should bring

to this society, and it should be clear that we do. We should act more like that and have a confidence in it.

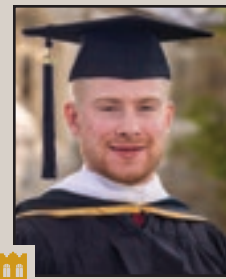
In a strange way the abortion issue — even though it's going to be very bitter and there's going to be a lot of hostility and anger against Christians, and especially Catholics — gives us the opportunity to witness like that in a very profound way in coming years. This is going to be a long-term discussion. It will be the contest for the heart and soul of America. What is it that we want to bequeath to our children and grandchildren if not a culture of life?

Vladimir Solovyov, the Russian Orthodox mystic, once said we can talk about what our nation is in history, but what is most important is what God's idea is for a country in eternity. Do we ask that question, "What is God's idea for the United States?" What does He intend us to be? What would He like this society to look like? I think that idea has something to do with charity and unity, with brotherhood and forgiveness, with reconciliation and looking out for each other, and speaking truthfully to each other, and a lot of things that we as Christians bring to the table; in other words, being a country with an authentic culture of life. ❖



CLASS OF 2022

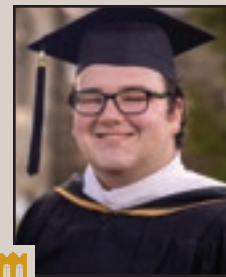
AND SENIOR THESIS TITLES



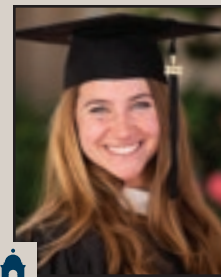
Christian and Pagan Magnanimity
CONNOR MICHAEL AMES
Fairfax, Virginia



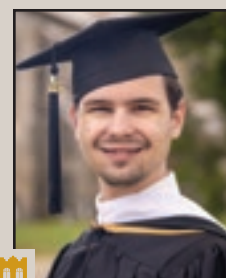
Friendship and Contemplation
GRACE ANDERSON
Lafayette, California



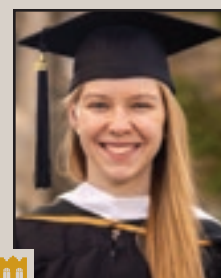
Why *Don Quixote* is Both a
Tragedy and a Comedy
NATHAN ALEXANDER ANDRUES
Novato, California



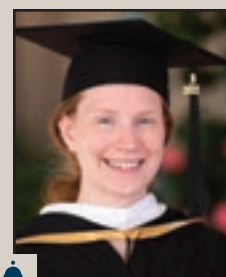
A Classical Education Is Necessary
for the Protection of the Primary Rights
and Duties of the American Citizen
**HOPE ELIZABETH MARY
ASCOUGH**
Dublin, Ireland



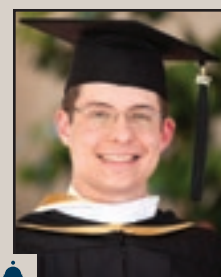
The Plurality of Meanings in the
Beginning of the Gospel of John
BENJAMIN MICHAEL AUGROS
Waterbury, Connecticut



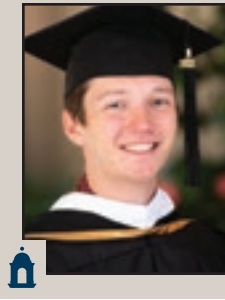
Poetry and the Passions in
Augustine's *Confessions*
MARY IMMACULATA BAKER
Littleton, Colorado



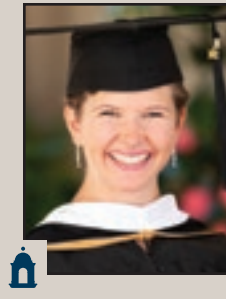
Pious Citizen, Tautology?
MARGUERITE ANNE BARRETT
Montreal, Quebec, Canada



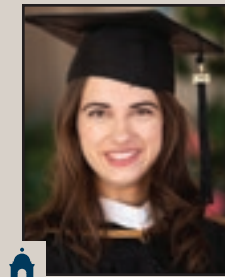
The Paper Mirror:
The Work Proper to Literature and
Its Role in Liberal Education
MARTIN ANTHONY BERQUIST
Williamsburg, Virginia



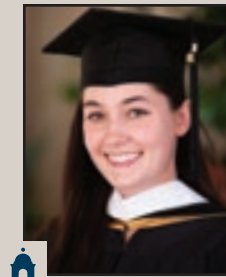
The Gift of Tongues and the Charismatic
Movement: An Examination of the
Relationship between Praying in
Tongues and Understanding
JOSEPH ALEXANDER BIRCH
Nokesville, Virginia



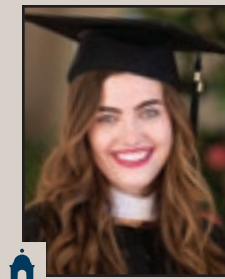
Redemptive Suffering: The Role of
Suffering in the Life of a Christian
CHAEI BORCHERS
Walnut Creek, California



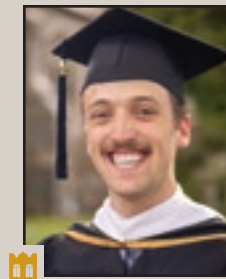
"O Death, Where is Your Sting?"
A Consideration of the Sacrament
of Marriage as a Repayment of the
Debt of Punishment
MARY SHAYE LOUISE BROST
Canby, Oregon



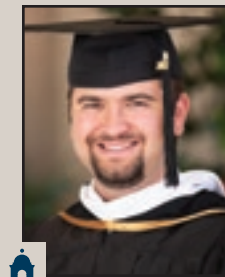
Household Management
as a Part of Virtue
ELIZABETH BROWN
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania



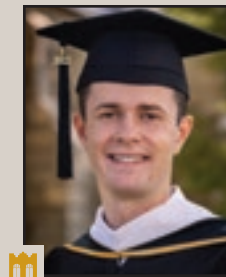
A Defense of the Free Market:
Why the Labor Theory of Value
Is Valueless
**CATHERINE MARIELLE
BURNHAM**
Farmington, New Mexico



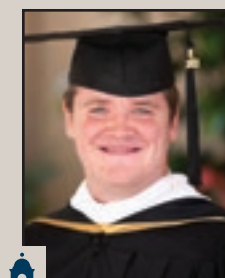
Reconciling St. Thomas with the
American Founding Documents: Whether
the American-Catholic Can Render
Obedience to Both God and Country
JOSEPH CAMPION CALDWELL
Denver, Colorado



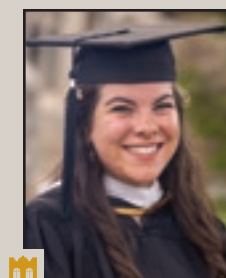
"Live in the World but Not of It":
Why the Properly Ambitious Man
Must Be a Good Catholic
JUSTIN WALTER CAMP
Newport Beach, California



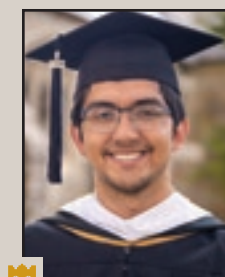
Divine Predication:
Naming the Unnameable God
NATHANAEL JOSEPH CASSIDY
Cromer, Norfolk, United Kingdom



To Preserve Even Pagan Things: On the
Duty of the Christian Man with Respect
to the True, the Good, and the Beautiful
MICHAEL CAUGHRON
Kansas City, Missouri




"Be It Done Unto Me According to Thy
Word": The Vital Connection between
Humility and Virtuous Womanhood
**CLOTILDE ISABEL MARIA
CECCHI**
Cazenovia, New York



Deification:
Man's Path to Happiness
JONAHS MAURICE CHAVEZ
Chowchilla, California

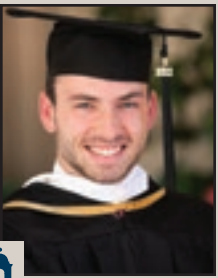


"And I, if I Be Lifted up from the Earth,
Will Draw All Things to Myself":
The Fittingness of the Crucifix as the
Preeminent Sign of the Church
LIA GRACE CLARITY
Piney Flats, Tennessee



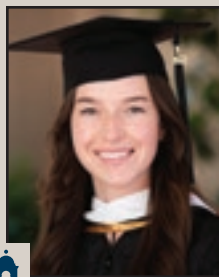
Heavenly Friendship:
The Perfection of All

MARIA GRACE CONROY
White Bear Lake, Minnesota



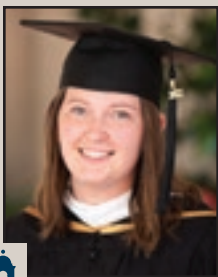
Person of Interest:
Distinguishing the Practice of Lending
at Interest from the Sin of Usury

IAN EDWARD CUMMINGS
Bronxville, New York




An Inquiry into Suffering's
Relation to Happiness

VERONICA ROSE DALY
Berwyn, Illinois




Parenthood, Patriotism, and Providence:
An Examination of Happiness
in Tolstoy's *War and Peace*

BRIDGET CAROLINE DOCKERY
Southaven, Mississippi



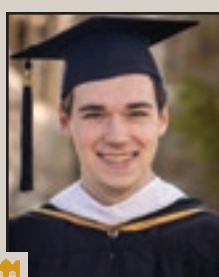
Capturing Time's Complete
Existence in the Mind

JOSEPH PETER KWON DONAHOE
Chatham, New Jersey




The Way of the Just Warrior:
Turning the Other Cheek

PETER FRANCIS DOWDY
Gill, Massachusetts




Moving Pictures:
What We Can Learn About Cinema
from Aristotle's *Poetics*

THOMAS DOYLE
Morgan Hill, California




Whether the Saints Will Read
Books in the New Heaven

PETER MICHAEL DUCHOW
Spokane, Washington



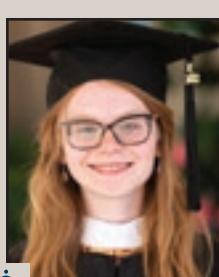
On the Necessity of Charity for a Heart
Seeking Restored Union with the Creator

AARON GREGORY ISAAC
DUFRESNE
Ventura, California




"A Slave Is But Half a Man":
On the Incompatibility of
Human Nature and Slavery

ANDREW JAMES ELLIS
Santa Paula, California



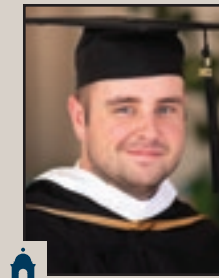
"Had You Not Been Their Father, These
White Flakes Did Challenge Pity of Them":
How Shakespeare Makes King Lear Pitiable

CECILIA JULIE ENGBRETSSEN
Kalamazoo, Michigan



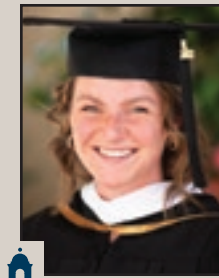
"Lord, Hear My Prayer, Listen to My Cry
for Mercy; in Your Faithfulness and
Righteousness Come to My Relief": On
the Compatibility of Petitionary Prayer and
God's Immutability according to St. Thomas

KEVIN CHRISTOPHER EUBANKS
Yucca Valley, California



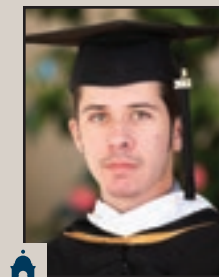
An Interesting Thesis

MICHAEL FOSS
Oregon City, Oregon



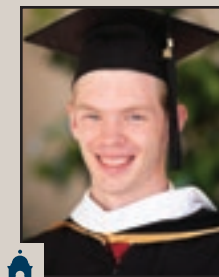
Be Angry and Sin Not:
A Reflection on Man's Anger
toward God

ABIGAIL MARIE FRANCIS
Suffolk, Virginia



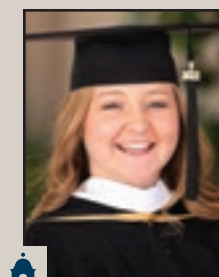
"What is Personality?":
A Decisive Movement towards the
Proper Definition of Personality

ANDREW ZAMUDIO GARCIA
Belmont, California



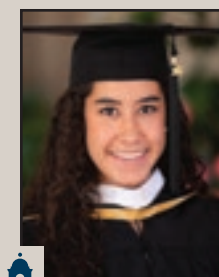
Math and Science:
A Reconciliation of the
Principia and the *Physics*

DOMINIC JOSEPH GARDNER
Moscow, Pennsylvania



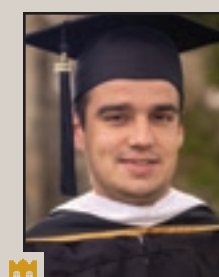
A Psychological and Philosophical
Defense of the Age of Reason

AILEEN CORDETTE GERRARD
Laguna Hills, California



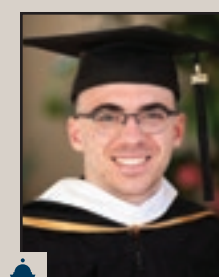
The Preeminence of Charity
in *Brideshead Revisited*

MARIA THÉRÈSE GOYETTE
Sterling, Virginia




The Possibility of Angelic Sin

PETER DOMINIC GOYETTE
Santa Paula, California



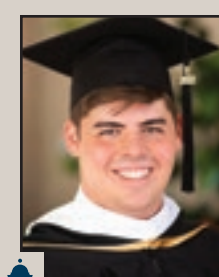
Taking Math to Its Limit:
An Explanation of Newton's Principles
of Calculus

CONNOR PATRICK GRAY
Broomfield, Colorado



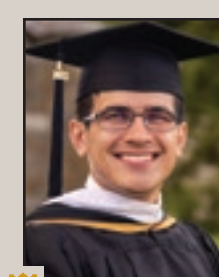
Peace:
The Happiness of Cities

JOHN HENRY GREENE
Riverside, California




The Man above the Law:
The Political Meaning within
Plato's Allegory of the Cave

JOSEPH ANTHONY GRUMBINE
Santa Paula, California



Whether Man Has a Natural Desire
for the Beatific Vision

JEAN CARLOS GUERREIRO
Brusque, Santa Catarina, Brasil



"Beauty Is in the Eye of the Beholder":
A Thesis on the Theory of Value

JOHN PAUL GUY
Cheatham County, Tennessee



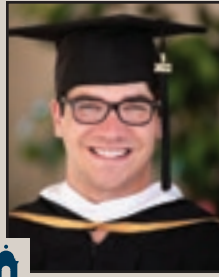
The Friendship Between Male and Female Differs Accidentally Rather Than Essentially from the Friendship of Male and Male

ISAAC JAMES FILIPI
Winchester, New Hampshire



O Felix Culpa

THÉRÈSE MARIE FLANDERS
Muscatine, Iowa



“His Life Is of Less Worth Than Clay, Because He Failed to Know the One Who Formed Him”: A Defense of the Necessity of Sacred Doctrine in the Christian Life

KENNETH DANIEL HANSEN
Acworth, Georgia



Yet Another Question About the Angels: How Do the Angels Know Themselves?

JEFFREY PATRICK AUGUSTINE HEALEY
Napa, California



My Ticket to Heaven: An Essay on the Nature of Suffering as Leading Us to Redemption

KEVIN JOHN HEFFERNAN
Springfield, Illinois



“For the Heart of This People Has Become Dull,” and Nobody Cares: Indifference as a Sin Against Charity

CECILIA ELIZABETH MARIE HUCKINS
Auburn, California



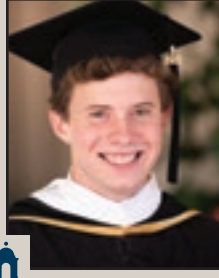
“We Will Come to Him and Make Our Abode with Him”: An Investigation into the Roles of Charity and Wisdom in the Indwelling of the Trinity

GREGORY FRANCIS JACKSON
Manassas, Virginia



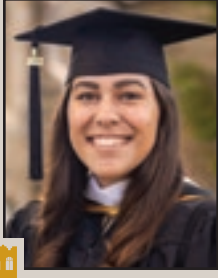
Sigrid Undset on Hope after Trauma

MADELEINE MARIE JOHANNES
Lincoln Park, New Jersey



Example as the Primary Source for the Moral Formation of Children

DOMINIC XAVIER KARAS
La Grange, Illinois



Marriage Is What Brings Us Together: War and a Piece of Saint Paul

SIMONE LOUISE KELLY
Santa Paula, California



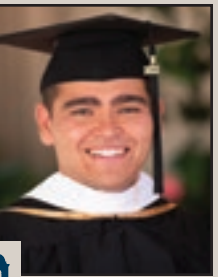
“Narrow Is the Way”: An Examination of the Fewness of the Saved

GABRIEL FRANCIS KOPP
Medina, Minnesota




We Christians Are All “Crazy” Charismatics

HALYNA KUNASZ
San Antonio, Texas



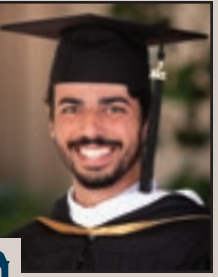
Friendship and Justice in the Good Life

ORION DANIEL LACOUR
Lomita, California



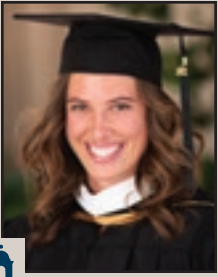
Charity, Rather Than Wisdom, Is Responsible for Differing Degrees of the Beatific Vision

JAMES MILAN LAFAVE
Butte, Montana



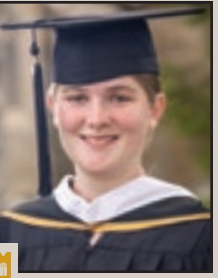
Moral Inclination and Beautiful Inspiration

FABIO SALVATORE LAURETTA
Ojai, California



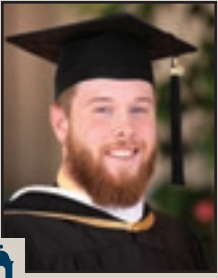
You Can’t Teach an Old Dog New Tricks: An Essay on Habits from Childhood and the Role They Play in the Virtuous Life

THERESE LOUISE LEMMON
Santa Paula, California



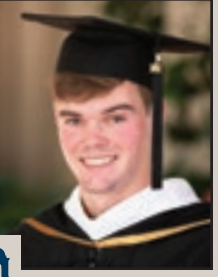
One and the Same but Different: On the Best Understanding of Education in Aristotle’s *Politics*

EMILY MARIE LETTENEY
Santa Paula, California



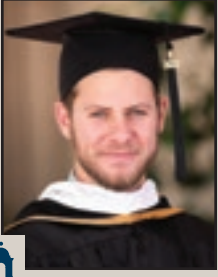
Lindalë Eäyë: The Relationship of Music and Being in J.R.R. Tolkien’s *Ainulindalë*

PETER RAYMOND LUCAS
Alexandria, Virginia



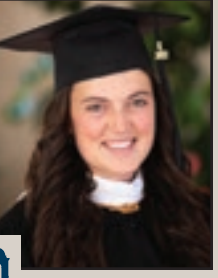
Usury and Justice: A Defense of the Interest Charge as a Just Transaction

JOSEPH PATRICK LYNCH
Annapolis, Maryland



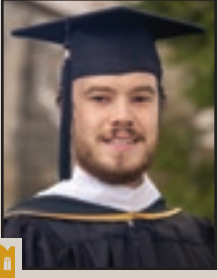
A Swift Account of Society: Contrasting Morality and Reason in *Gulliver’s Travels*

DAVID NICHOLAS MATRANGA
San Marino, California



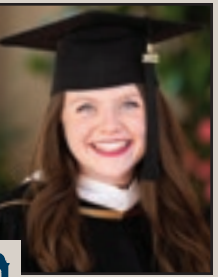
Femininity: What It Means to Be Woman

COLETTE REGINA MCCORMACK
West Chicago, Illinois




“Within the Hollow Crown of a King Keeps Death His Court”: The Solution in Shakespeare’s *Richard II* to the Problem of How a Ruler Ought to Be a Friend to His People

PETER JOSEPH MCDONALD
Pillowville, Tennessee



Secundum Verbum Tuum: An Argument for the Necessity of Language for Friendship

ELIZABETH ROSE MCSORLEY
Scottsdale, Arizona



Dante’s *Inferno*: What the Hell Is Dante Doing?

ABIGAIL CATHERINE MERING
Ventura, California



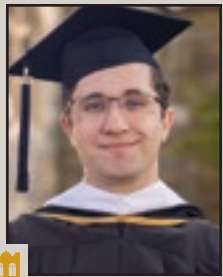
The Role of the Imagination in
Pure Geometry: An Investigation into
the Object of Pure Geometry

PAUL WILLIAM METILLY
Paxton, Massachusetts




On the Degree of Intelligibility
of Integration

LAUREN LLEWELLYN MITCHELL
Union Grove, Alabama




Is Aristotelian Science Possible
for Hume?

PIERCE JOSEPH MULHOLLAND
Lincoln, Nebraska




On the Extent of Obedience in
Light of the Limits of Authority

KEVIN CARMODY MURPHY
St. Louis, Missouri



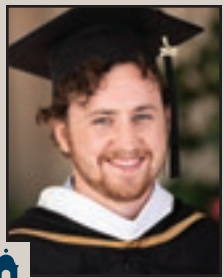
I'll Know When I Get to Heaven:
An Exploration of How the
Beatific Vision Will Satisfy the
Human Heart's Desire to Know

MARGARET TERESA MURPHY
Cheshire, Connecticut




Eat at the Table: Why We Should
Come to Appreciate Formal Dinners

SARAH JEANNE NIBLOCK
Kansas City, Missouri



The Origin of Conflict

EDWARD JOSEPH O'REILLY
West Hills, California



Gender Ideology and
the Perversion of Law

LUCY CHRISTINE O'REILLY
West Kelowna, British Columbia, Canada



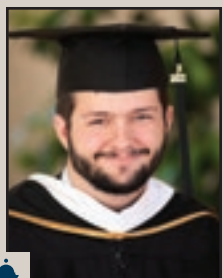
"You Shall Love Your Neighbor
as Yourself": Homer on Happiness
and the Common Good

MARY MARGARET O'REILLY
Ojai, California




The Study of Non-Rational Animals
as a Part of the Philosopher's Pursuit
of Wisdom

**THERESA MARIE-PHILOMENE
PEEK**
Wanganui, New Zealand



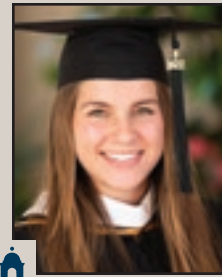
On Natural Reason's Certainty
That the Human Intellect
Knows After Death

ELIJAH JOHN PERRINE
Anthem, Arizona



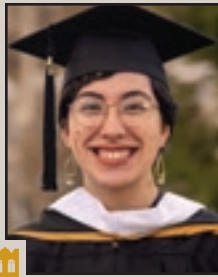
"Holy Wisdom Is Not Clear and Thin Like
Water, but Thick and Dark like Blood":
The Necessity of Poetry for Understanding
Man's Relation to the Divine As Illustrated
by Lewis in *Till We Have Faces*

OLIVIA JOAN PERRY
Delta, British Columbia, Canada



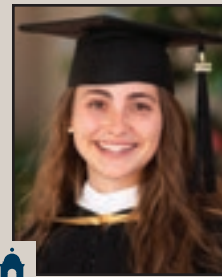
Whether a Man Is Able to Attain Perfect
Wisdom during His Natural Life?

MARY TERESA PIPES
Wildwood, Missouri



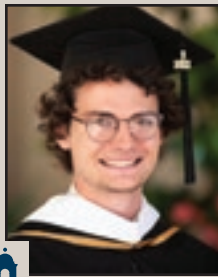
The Perfection of the Soul
Through the Fine Arts

**SARAH CLARISSA PRECIADO
CASTRO**
Sunnyvale, California



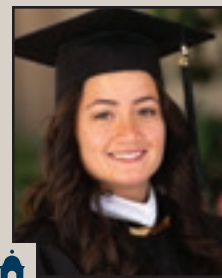
How Ivan Comes to Life:
An Investigation of Leo Tolstoy's
The Death of Ivan Ilyich

GEMMA QUACKENBUSH
Ojai, California




How to Prove the Existence of Dog:
An Investigation into the Character
of Empirical Knowledge

JORDAN DAVID RAUM
Anthem, Arizona



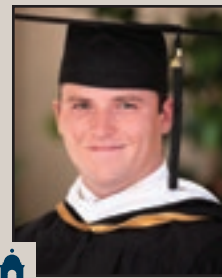
A Comparison of Aristotle's and Descartes'
Accounts of Sensation and
Their Relation to Sense Experience

BERNADETTE MARIE RICHARD
Concord, California



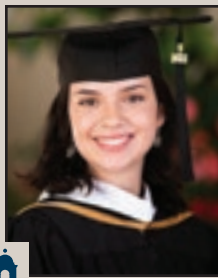
"Let Every Soul Be Subject to Higher
Powers. ... Not Only for Wrath, but Also
for Conscience's Sake": On the Power of
Human Laws to Bind in Conscience

DOMENIC JOSEPH RICHARD
San Jose, California



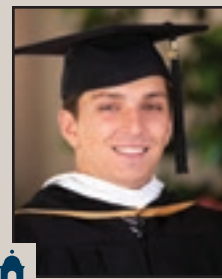
"Render to Caesar the Things That Are Caesar's
and to God the Things That Are God's": The
Christian Living According to the Principles
Contained in St. Augustine's *The City of God* Is
the Best Citizen of the Political State

THOMAS PATRICK RICHARD
San Jose, California



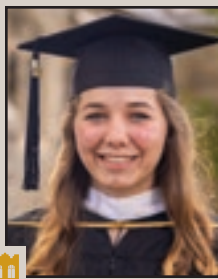
Pushing Euclid to His Limits:
A Search for the Principles of Equating
Curved and Rectilinear Areas

**MARIANNA LOURDES
RODRIGUEZ**
Dallas, Texas




Intellectual Tyranny

DANIEL JOSEPH SABADOS
Wexford, Pennsylvania



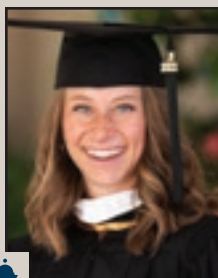
"I Know I Have Offended You Sorely; But
the Greatest Misfortune that Could Befall
Us Would Be to Lose Each Other": The
Importance of Forgiveness and a Submission
of Will in the Life of a Christian, as Portrayed
in *Gunnar's Daughter* by Sigrid Undset

ROSAMARIE ANNA SALAS
Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada




Defending Substance:
A Critique of Hume's Denial of Knowing
Substance Based on Aristotelian Principles

DANIEL EARL SALINAS
Vallejo, California



Intrinsic Motion:
The Cause of the Powerful Effect
of Music on Us

**ANNA THERESE CECILIA
SANTINE**
Macomb, Michigan



In Defense of Film,
the Imitative Art of Our Times

ROBERT JOHN SANTINE
Macomb, Michigan




Whether Truth Admits
of More and Less

THERESE DANIELLE SAUDER
Glendale, Arizona



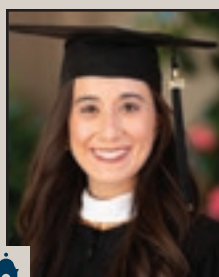
“No Longer Do I Call You Servants....
but Friends”: An Investigation into
Man’s Relationship with God through
Friendship and Charity

**RICHARD KOLBE JOHN
SCHAECHER SEELEY**
Santa Paula, California



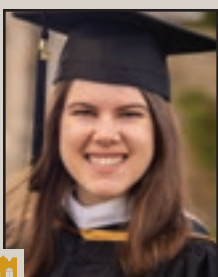
“Forgiveness Is No Substitute for Justice”

MARGARET MARIE SHORT
Pasadena, California



Restless Hearts Need Restless Mothers:
On the Necessity of Motherhood in Moral
Education

JULIANA MENDES SILVA
Visalia, California



The Pleasing Nature of the Unpleasant:
A Refutation of Plato’s Account
of Poetry

KATHARINE ANN SIMIA
Green Bay, Wisconsin



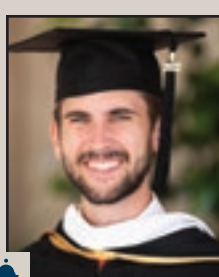
Oh, to Be Friends with a God:
The Perfection of Human Friendship

MARY ROSE SORENSON
Elk Grove, California




Properly Understanding Charity
as Compared with Motion:
A Defense of Saint Augustine’s
Definition of Charity

**SOPHIE GENEVIEVE
STEIGERWALD**
Elm Grove, Wisconsin




Finding Iris:
An Exploration of Where Wonder Begins

JACOB CHARLES STEINEKE
Gilbert, Arizona




Is “The Pursuit of Happiness”
a Worthy Pursuit? An Investigation
into the Nature of Morality

MAXIMILIAN JOSEPH TITTMANN
Pasadena, California



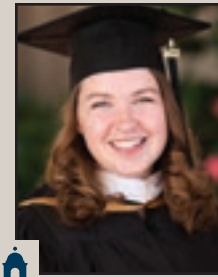
As If Constrained by Truth Itself:
An Account of the Human Acquisition
of the Proper Principles of Particular
Sciences according to First Philosophy

CORY MICHAEL TURNER
Huntington Beach, California



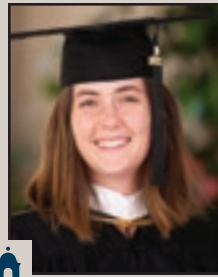
For a True and Perfect Science:
First Principles of the *Physics* and the
Development of the Scientific Method

VICTOR AUGUSTUS ULIZKO
Bloomfield, New Jersey



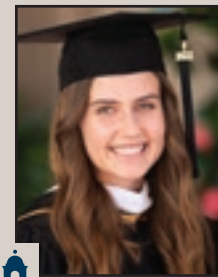
“Gathering the Meaning of Things”:
How We Learn Through Poetry

GENEVIEVE MARIE URBAN
Mentor, Ohio



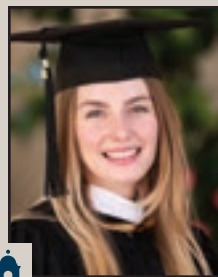
The Purpose of Poetry:
Whether Poetry Is Ordered
to Moral Formation

GRETA KAY VANDAMME
San Juan Capistrano, California



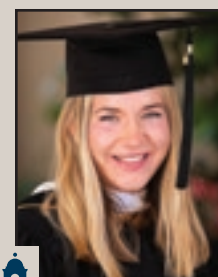
A Comparison of Kantian
and Aristotelian Ethics

LANA XENIA VANDAMME
San Juan Capistrano, California



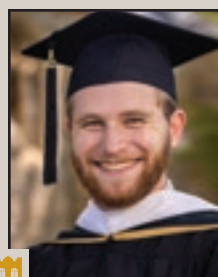
“United We Stand”:
An Argument for the Necessity
of Friendship in Unifying
the Political Community

LUCY WARING VIETOR
Phoenix, Arizona



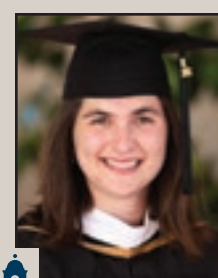
The Importance of Storytelling in
Scripture As Exemplified in the
Second Chapter of the Book of Hosea

HANNAH MARIA WALDSTEIN
Steubenville, Ohio




Christian Greatness:
How the Christian Is Called
to Be Magnanimous

LIAM EDWARD WALSH
Banks, Oregon



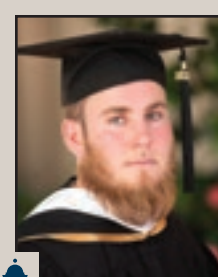
An Argument Towards
Mary’s Role as “Co-Redemptrix”
in the Church

NICOLE THERESE WALSHE
Chino Hills, California



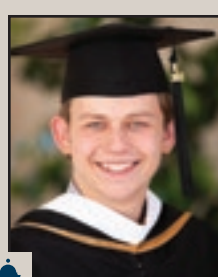
In the Fall of a Sparrow:
Against Natural Contingency in
Respect to Material Indeterminacy

BRANDON HAN-YEU WANG
Anthem, Arizona




On the Definition of Space-Time
According to the Special Theory
of Relativity

TIMOTHY ARISTOTLE WASSELL
Cheatham County, Tennessee



Redefining Man according to
His Supernatural End

**MICHAEL CHRISTOPHER
WIEBERSCH**
Delafield, Wisconsin



Newton’s Apple Doesn’t Fall Far from
the Tree; It Falls Proportionally As the
Inverses of the Squares of the Distances:
How We Can Know the Natural World
Using Mathematics

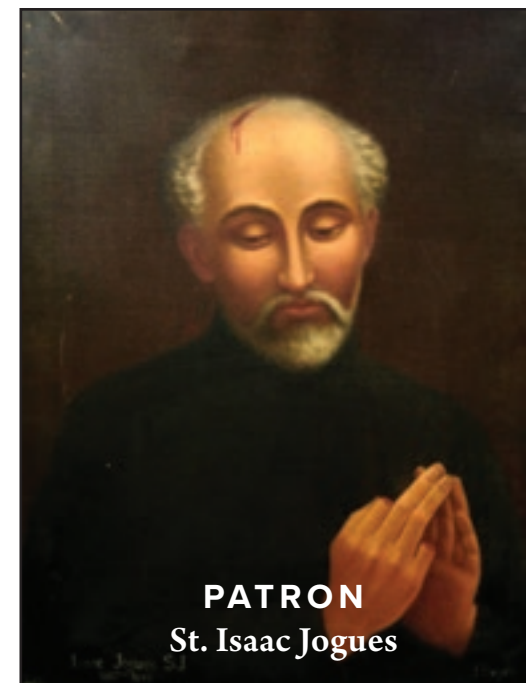
MICHAEL JOSEPH YOUNG
Littleton, Colorado



NEW ENGLAND COMMENCEMENT



THE CLASS OF 2022



PATRON
St. Isaac Jogues

QUOTATION

*For God loves nothing so much
as the man who lives with wisdom.
... I loved her and sought her
from my youth;
I desired to take her for my bride,
and I became enamored of her beauty.*
— Wisdom 7:28 and 8:2

“The Light of Christ Enriches Our Faith and Illuminates Our Intellects”

Homily from the 2022 New England Baccalaureate Mass of the Holy Spirit

by the Most Rev. Robert Joseph McManus, S.T.D.
Bishop of Worcester, Massachusetts

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

We live in a world that is saturated with massive amounts of information which can be quickly accessed with one strike of a computer keyboard, but at the same time we live in a world that is profoundly lacking in wisdom. The spiritual gift of wisdom is so crucial to living the Catholic life fully and authentically that the Catholic Church lists the gift of wisdom first among the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit.

When I go around the Diocese of Worcester confirming my



“Thomas Aquinas College boldly identifies itself as an authentically Catholic institution that proudly and effectively introduces its students to the great Catholic intellectual tradition.”

young people, I tell them that if they really want to be wise, then they must learn the true answer to the three most important questions in life: 1. Where have I come from? 2. Where am I going?, and 3. How do I get there?

The correct answers to these three salient questions are constitutive of the Church’s proclamation of salvation. We come from God; we are going home to God, and we do this by encountering the person of the Crucified and Risen Christ and by falling in love with Him and surrendering our intellects and wills to the salvific truth that Christ, and Christ alone, is our Way, our Truth, and our Life. A person may be highly educated and have all types of degrees after his or her name, but if that person does not know the end for which he was created, then that person

cannot be wise and that person cannot be truly free.

Thomas Aquinas College boldly identifies itself as an authentically Catholic institution that proudly and effectively introduces its students to the great Catholic intellectual tradition. I firmly believe that the Catholic intellectual tradition can serve as a

privileged way of our assisting the Holy Spirit in renewing the face of the earth, because the Catholic intellectual tradition is rooted in the truth that is attainable through the divinely bestowed gifts of faith and reason.

In this morning’s reading from the Gospel of St. John, we heard these powerful and encouraging words: “And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Advocate to be with you, the Spirit of Truth” (Jn. 14:16-17). These words of Christ spoken at the Last Supper on the night before He died for the salvation of the world beg the question whose answer has an enormous impact for all people for all time and places: What is truth?

The Church has for 2,000 years raised and answered that question definitively: The Truth is Christ, the Word made flesh. As the Second Vatican Council teaches: “In reality, it is only in the mystery of the Word made flesh that the mystery of man becomes clear. Christ the Lord, Christ the new Adam ... fully reveals man to himself and brings to light his most high calling” (GS, #22).

My dear friends, our culture desperately needs the light of Christ’s truth, the light of the Spirit of Truth, to dispel the prevailing ignorance and denial of the truth about the human person



“The light of Christ enriches our faith and illuminates our intellects, thereby helping to establish a culture of truth.”

is consumed, the memory of His passion is recalled, the mind is filled with grace and a pledge of future glory is given to us.”

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



made in the image and likeness of God, created male and female, and called to a life of communion with one another. In short, the light of Christ enriches our faith and illuminates our intellects, thereby helping to establish a culture of truth that acknowledges that love is more powerful than hate; that truth will always triumph over falsity, and that for those who love God everything works together for good (Rom. 8:28).

In a few minutes we will receive the inestimable gift of our Eucharistic Lord in Holy Communion. It is in the reception of Holy Communion that we receive the divine grace to participate in the Holy Spirit’s work of “renewing the face of the earth.” Indeed, it is in the reception of the Holy Eucharist that we come to know existentially the profound theological truth that your patron, St. Thomas Aquinas, taught so beautifully in the hymn “O Sacrum Convivium”: “O Sacred Banquet, in which Christ

“If We Love Wisdom, We Must Love Mary, for Wisdom Loved Her First”

by Peter McDonald ('22)

Bishop McManus, President McLean, Deans Kaiser and Goyette, governors, faculty, family members, friends, and fellow classmates, it is my privilege to address you today. I thank my class for the honor of speaking on its behalf on this happy occasion as we complete our time at Thomas Aquinas College. With the Apostle Paul we say, “Thanks be to God, Who hath given us the victory through Our Lord, Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 15:57), in gratitude celebrating the God-given triumph of our education.

It is noteworthy that today as well marks the triumph of this New England campus, as we become its first graduates, and it is fitting that we commemorate this along with our graduation, not because of the coincidence in time, but because each event enlightens the purpose and nature of the other. First, obviously, but by no means trivial, our graduation is the first fruits of many years

“We have helped to found on this campus a community of study, prayer, and love.”

of planning, anxiety, generous donations, sweat, hard work, and ceaseless prayers. All the physical, mental, and academic work has now been rewarded. We thank all who worked and are present here today as the success of your labor.

Secondly, however, and more importantly, the founding of a new campus



The Class of 2022 elected Peter McDonald as its Class Speaker ...

informs what we have done in our education these past four years. I would like to leave an understanding of this as a parting reminder and encouragement to my classmates and, to others gathered, a look into what our life consists of due to our time at the College. Our education here has mirrored the founding of this campus, in that we have helped to found on this campus a community of study, prayer, and love.

So in our education we have created a community between each other of wisdom; as we have striven to make our campus rich in beauty and dignity, so have we filled our souls with the most beautiful and noble truths. And as we have set at the heart of our campus a chapel dedicated to Mary, Mother of Perpetual Help, so we have, through acquiring wisdom, dedicated our minds and souls to Mary, Seat of Wisdom.

Community and Wisdom

When we first came to the College and later to this campus, we did not have a community within our class or with the tutors, much less with the staff and families: We had no common love and habits, no shared life. Over time, through “sharing the proverbial salt,” we have created a community: Studying, learning, praying, eating, and working together have made us into one body with a shared love of our college and campus.

Similarly, but in a fuller and truer way, our class has made a single community through our shared love and pursuit of wisdom. We have made ourselves a true intellectual community, not

in the sense that we have been dedicated to intellectual pursuits, but that we have made a community between our intellects through the study of wisdom. In class, in dinner table discussions, in personal musings intimately shared with one another, we have learned wisdom together, sharing the salt of knowledge with each other.

This has made us like each other in wisdom, made us into images of each other that are images of the truth! Indeed, if, as Aristotle says in the *Ethics*, friendship built on the good is the highest friendship, and contemplation of the truth is the highest good, then we have built between ourselves the greatest type of community: a union of our souls reflecting in each other the truth that we know.

It was not simply a community that was lacking here, however, when the

College began to inhabit the Northfield campus. Though this campus came with many beautiful and valuable structures, lawns, and trees, much was in disrepair. This opportunity was seized upon to make this campus a fitting and noble place for the study of wisdom. Beautiful new floors and roofs, doors and paths and gardens were all brought about to make a resplendent and ennobling setting for study.

Likewise, our education has done the same for our minds. The most beautiful things ever thought have been planted in our minds: Euclid’s *Elements*, the verses of Shakespeare and Milton, the inner workings of animals and plants, Aristotle’s proofs for the unmoved mover and the

“Mary is the crown of our education, our pride and beauty; she is the help of our education, giving all knowledge to us; and she is the heart of our education.”

highest intelligible and good God, and Aquinas’s exposition of the nature of the Trinity have been given to us in our education to make our mind beautiful. More than any building or garden, our minds have become, through assimilating these wonders, places of true delight for us. After our education we have nowhere to delight in beauty better than the truth that we have learned.

Our Chapel and Our Lady

I have left out our beloved chapel in this list of our beautiful things because it deserves its own place as the heart of our campus and as the analogy for the heart of our education. Our Mother of Perpetual Help Chapel is our crown, our help, and our heart. It is our crown, the most beautiful possession we have on this campus; its gold and illumination are a joy to behold and a pride for us to show. It is our help, as we go there perpetually for any



... Clotilde Cecchi to sing the National Anthem ...

need and pray before Our Lady’s icon or Christ in the tabernacle, asking for clarity in our understanding, friendship and patience with our peers, good grades, and knowledge of our vocation. Lastly, it is our heart, because here we visit Our Lady and receive Our Lord from her bosom, the greatest of all good.

Likewise is Mary, herself, to our education. The crown, the help, and the heart of our education is Our Lady, seat of Wisdom, who carries, as in the icon in our chapel, Christ, Wisdom Incarnate. Our Lady is established in our hearts and minds because we have sought wisdom, and she is enthroned wherever wisdom is. For, Wisdom is not an abstract concept, nor is it a condition of the mind, but a person, Who is the child of Mary. Thus the Church uses the words of Wisdom itself on her feasts: “I was with Him forming all things: and was delighted every day, playing before Him at all times.”

It is in Mary that we find all our knowledge: The perfect solids of Euclid and the elegant forms of Ptolemy grew within her womb; all knowledge of philosophy, of the soul, the common good, and motion, suckled at her breast; the unmoved mover, she carried in her arms, and the highest intelligible good, she taught to speak; she played with the end of all knowledge at the home in Nazareth, and she was His delight. The wisdom that we have begun to form by this education can only be found within Mary; if we love wisdom, we must love Mary, for Wisdom loved her first. Thus, Mary is the crown of our education, our pride and beauty;

she is the help of our education, giving all knowledge to us; and she is the heart of our education, the actual possession of what we are striving for.

I hope that this address has reminded you, my classmates, why you are here and what you have done; I hope it has encouraged parents, benefactors, and tutors to think on what they have accomplished in us; and I hope it has shown friends the riches that we celebrate today.

Continuing this Work

As the Class of 2022 goes out, we must remember what we have done at Northfield and continue the work we have begun. We must not abandon our community of wisdom, but always work to build up the common good of knowledge with whomever we encounter. We must continue the adornment of our minds with



... and Margaret Short to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

the beauty of truth, eschewing the ugly corruption of the culture around us for the nobility of the literature, mathematics, philosophy, and theology we have been trained to love. Most importantly we must continue to dedicate ourselves to the honor and love of Our Lady, Mother of Wisdom and Perpetual Help, praying to her, seeking her aid and honoring her in our pursuit of Wisdom, Who is her son.

We ask the aid, encouragement, and prayers of all the friends here present as our time comes to a close, and may Our Lady bless us all with her child as she continues to help us perpetually. Thank you. ♦

“A Journey of the Intellect, Will, Heart, and Conscience into the Brilliant Light of the Truth”

by the Most Rev. Robert Joseph McManus, S.T.D.
Bishop of Worcester, Massachusetts

My dear brother priests, President McLean, faculty, staff, students, members of the graduating Class of 2022, family members and friends, and all my dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

I am deeply honored to have been asked to deliver the Commencement Address for this first graduating class of Thomas Aquinas College at its Northfield Campus. I would also like to thank Dr. Michael McLean, as he takes leave as president of the College, for his exemplary service to Catholic higher education by promoting so effectively the Catholic intellectual tradition. Dr. McLean, in the name of the Church, I sincerely thank you for your accompanying generations of students in the pursuit of all that is good, beautiful, and true. May God bless you abundantly for all you have done for Thomas Aquinas College and for the Church.

Pursue Truth

For people of faith, there is no such thing as mere coincidence or sheer good luck. Rather, for people of faith, all that we experience as good and wholesome and holy comes from God’s providential care and love for us. Therefore, I believe that it is providential that we celebrate this commencement ceremony during



“For the last four years, you, the graduates of the Class of 2022, have had the opportunity, indeed, the privilege, to pursue the truth during your course of studies.”

the Easter Season, which is a season of hope and joy. The first gift that the Risen Christ bestowed upon His apostles after His resurrection was the gift of peace, and that is exactly the gift and blessing that I wish for all of you as you graduate today from Thomas Aquinas College. I wish you a peace that only comes when we know that we are pursuing that mission and destiny that God intends for us.

For the last four years, you, the graduates of the Class of 2022, have had the opportunity, indeed, the privilege, to pursue the truth during your course of studies at Thomas Aquinas College, both in California and here in New England: the truth about God, the truth about the world and our society, and the truth about yourselves.

But a well-educated and intellectually informed person must also be aware that in certain sectors of our society, even in the world of academia, the very existence of objective truth is called into question. For some of our contemporaries, truth is seen as the enemy of intelligence and freedom, an impediment to radical inquiry and the frank discussion of ideas that are fundamental to the life of the mind. Some in our American society who have considerable influence on social and cultural trends would even maintain that objective truth is a quaint idea whose time has passed.

But for you graduates who have studied within the context of

a Catholic college such as Thomas Aquinas College, you know that that is not the case. The fact of the matter is that there is no rivalry between truth and freedom, and between faith and reason, as Pope St. John Paul II reminded us so often during his long and luminous pontificate. Indeed, the Catholic intellectual tradition is firmly rooted in the conviction that the attainment of truth is the very condition for being truly wise and truly free.

Moreover, to quote the late St. John Paul II, “Faith and reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth” (*Fides et Ratio*). They allow the human person to seek after truth that reason can discover and that faith solidly affirms. Yes, a Catholic liberal arts education is predicated on the principle that faith does not shackle reason in myth or illusion but provides reason with a new transcendent horizon within which to discover the very meaning of human existence.

On August 15, 1990, St. John Paul II issued an Apostolic Constitution entitled *Ex Corde Ecclesiae, From the Heart of the Church*. Historically the first universities in Europe began and developed in the shadow of some of the most famous Italian, French, and English cathedrals. What these Catholic universities sought to do was to ground their academic endeavors in the words of Christ spoken in the eighth chapter of St. John’s Gospel: “If you continue in My word, you are truly My disciples. You shall know the truth, and the truth will make you free” (Jn. 8:31-32). At the heart of the Catholic intellectual tradition is the profound realization that all authentically Catholic education is a journey of the intellect, will, heart, and conscience into the brilliant light of the truth.

What it Means to be Human

What is also fundamental to the Catholic intellectual tradition is the fostering of a proper understanding of what it means to be truly human. Many of the most neuralgic problems in our contemporary culture, most notably the rapidly growing acceptance and even promotion of transgenderism, find their roots in a faulty anthropology and an outright rejection of an Aristotelian–Thomistic metaphysics.

One only has to cite the statement of the retired Associate Justice Anthony Kennedy in the 1992 *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* case, where he stated, “At the heart of liberty, is the right to define one’s own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe and of the mystery of life itself.” Such a statement demonstrates in a stark



Bishop McManus blesses the diplomas.

and disturbing way how the rejection of an Aristotelian–Thomistic metaphysics leads to such blatant philosophical absurdity.

One of the greatest contributions that Catholic education at all levels can make to our contemporary culture is to re-introduce into curricula, and then into the public square, through a well-formed conscience, a philosophically correct understanding of what it means to be human. Which is to say clearly and

without apology the following: “The human person is created in the image and likeness of God. There is an essential metaphysical difference between man and woman. And all people have an inviolable human dignity that is not bestowed upon them by culture, society, or government, but by the creative hand of a gracious and benevolent God.”

John Cardinal Wright, who was the first Bishop of Worcester, where I now have the privilege of serving as its fifth bishop, stated after the Second Vatican Council that a type of collective intellectual and moral amnesia had settled over the Catholic Church and, by extension, over American society in general. The most evident indication of the truth of the Cardinal’s astute observation is the rampant and insidious intellectual and moral relativism that has infected not only most of our secular universities, but also some of our Catholic institutions of higher learning. Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, one of the most influential theologians of the mid to late 20th and early 21st centuries, has insightfully described this disturbing phenomenon as “the dictatorship of relativism.”

“There is no rivalry between truth and freedom, and between faith and reason, as Pope St. John Paul II reminded us so often during his long and luminous pontificate.”

The Catholic Church, particularly through its institutions of Catholic education, can help restore the public’s understanding of fundamental metaphysical and moral truths about reality. This type of education is very important in countering the dictatorship of relativism in our American culture because the firm acquisition of metaphysical and moral truth leads to true wisdom as well as to

a pressing desire to “restore all things in Christ.”

My dear graduates, I firmly believe that Thomas Aquinas College is well-equipped to prepare its students to reclaim the intellectual and moral foundations of our culture by means of what our recent popes have called “the promotion of the new evangelization.” Here in New England we are blessed to have several colleges that are authentically Catholic, that rigorously introduce their students to the Catholic intellectual tradition in a systematic way, based on a reading of the Great Books of Western civilization. Thomas Aquinas College and some other Catholic colleges are carrying out what the Church expects from her academic institutions of higher learning, namely, to present the Catholic tradition of faith and morals and the abiding relationship between faith and reason in an intelligent, reasonable, and coherent way.

Be the New “Benedicts”

In 1981 the philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre published a book entitled *After Virtue*, which set off shock waves throughout the American academy and beyond. The book’s fundamental thesis was that modern moral discourse had suffered shipwreck and had lost its foundation in reason and virtue. In the last paragraph of the book, MacIntyre makes the following sobering statement: “If my account of our moral predicament is correct, we ought also to conclude that, for some time now, we have reached a turning point. This time, however, the barbarians are not waiting beyond the frontiers; they have already been governing us for quite some time ... We are not waiting for Godot ... We are waiting for another — doubtlessly a very different — Benedict” (*After Virtue*, p.263).

What did St. Benedict, the founder of Western monasticism, do for Western civilization in the 5th century in Italy? Simply put, he withdrew from the political chaos and moral decadence of the declining Roman Empire to *ora et labora*, to work and to pray. But this initial withdrawal from the world was only in preparation to send forth Benedictine monks back into Western Europe to share

the fruit of their work, prayer, and study. Establishing monasteries and monastic schools throughout Europe, these monks sowed the seeds of the truth of the Gospel, the Good News of Jesus Christ, Who is “the Way, the Truth and the Life.” And by doing so, Europe awoke as if from a deep cultural slumber.

My dear graduating Class of 2022, you have received an excellent classical Catholic education here at Thomas Aquinas College that has prepared you to be the new “Benedicts” of our contemporary American culture, something that our contemporary Ameri-



... and Sophie Steigerwald ('22).

can culture desperately needs. You may rightly ask: “But how do we do this?” May I suggest the following.

The most significant contribution that you can make in fashioning the uncharted future that lies before you is to undertake your life journey with that peace that derives from being grounded and living in the truth. Christ tells us who are His disciples and friends that we must be “the salt of the earth and light of the world” (Mt. 5:13,14). That is a daunting challenge. What is Jesus really asking of each of us? It is this: He is asking us to transform our society and culture with the light of His gospel so that you and I and our brothers and sisters in the human family might have life and have it to the full.

But who is this Jesus, Who offers us such a gift if we follow Him as his friends and disciples? He is the truth of God made flesh. And if we remain rooted in Him, we will know and love the truth, and the truth will make us free, free enough to embrace the future with confidence, free enough to celebrate life with joy and tranquility of spirit.

Graduates of the Class of 2022, do not be afraid! Do not be afraid to be witnesses to Christ, Who is the Splendor of Truth and the Gospel of Life. Do not be afraid to cast your nets into the deep waters of the salvific truth of the Gospel. And finally, do not be afraid to be “other Benedicts.”

Congratulations, dear graduates, and may the peace of the Risen Christ reign in your hearts forever! Amen. God bless you! ❖



Bishop McManus presents a diploma to Nathanael Cassidy ('22) ...

SENIOR REFLECTION

An Answer to a Prayer

by Peter Goyette ('22)

On Saturday, May 21, my classmates and I became the first class to graduate from the New England campus, 50 years after Thomas Aquinas College first opened in California. During the Baccalaureate Mass and Commencement ceremony, I was stirred by the realization of how much God has providentially transformed our lives. While I cannot speak for my classmates in detail, I will offer the following reflection of my own experience:

When I consider the last six years of my life, I see that, despite my own poor sense of direction and my tendencies toward sin, God has nonetheless cared for me and offered me a better life. I see His love for me, especially through my time at Thomas Aquinas College.

I came to TAC to find good friends and a wife, but most of all to find a real sense of purpose. I was unhappy and restless

“If God gives me the grace to persevere in this vocation, I will dedicate myself to contemplating His beautiful truths.”

in my childhood, especially during my high school years. I was too lazy to study and too focused on pleasing myself such that I didn’t have good friends and wasn’t even a very loving brother or son. My life was stagnant, and my heart was cold. I did have the Faith, but I did not make it my own.

I remember a particular night six years ago, when I tearfully prayed three sorrowful Rosaries prostrate in the rain (one of the rare times when I prayed on my

own). I pleaded to Mary that God would change my life and save me from my habitual sinfulness.

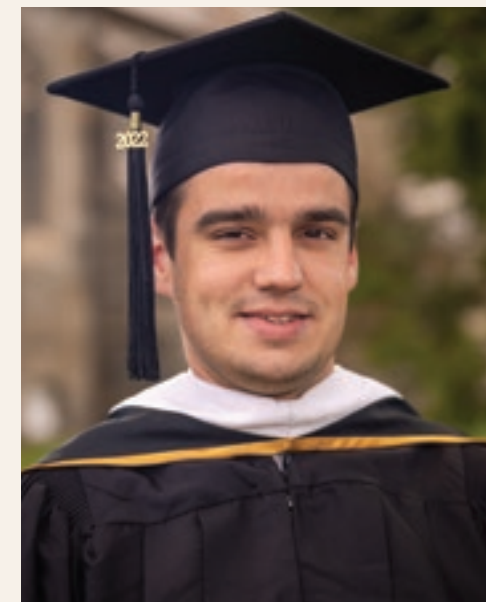
So I looked to TAC to provide a new setting that could help me to live a better life. I began on the California campus for freshman year. I enjoyed it somewhat and planned on staying there all four years. All of my friends were staying there, too. Then, one November day, I impulsively decided to transfer to the New England campus for the sake of adventure.

To Northfield I went. I was in a new place and was relatively unfamiliar with my own classmates. I quickly fell in love with the tranquil beauty of the campus. And, over the next three years, I also came to love my classmates and appreciate the special bond we had as members of the same first class. I was inspired by the good social, study, and prayer habits they modeled.

During these years, I came to deeply enjoy the intellectual life. Following the lead of my classmates, I tried to take advantage of the great tutors, the insightful readings, and the thought-provoking classes. I always found that whatever effort I put into my studies paid off. Even though most of what I learned wasn’t of direct practical value, I found that the truths were beautiful and invigorating to behold.

Even more, I found new purpose through regular prayer. A friend I admired had the habit of praying extra time in the Chapel. Following this example, I prayed more on my own, especially on nights when I had some free time. A newfound inner peace and stability crept into my everyday life.

During Lent in my junior year, I be-



gan to realize a desire within myself for religious life. I noticed that through my everyday life of study and prayer, I was becoming more joyful. So, I took steps toward discerning with the Norbertines and Dominicans. By the end of December that year, I began an application to join the Eastern Dominican Province. On St. Patrick’s Day I was accepted to join the community, and will enter this fall.

Although I consider myself unworthy of such a privilege, I am elated. The life of a Dominican friar consists of prayer, study, contemplation, and preaching. At Thomas Aquinas College, I have had a taste of just such a life, and I have become so happy and joyful as a result. I have worked with my classmates to come to the truth, and to grow in love through this common pursuit.

Living the life of a Dominican religious priest is thus an answer to my prayer to Mary six years ago. If God gives me the grace to persevere in this vocation, I will dedicate myself to contemplating His beautiful truths, and then to sharing this beauty with the world.

I am nothing short of being shocked by the generosity of God. My prayer has been answered more fully than I could expect. Having already given me wonderful parents, God also guided me to and through Thomas Aquinas College, where I discovered my vocation in a life dedicated to the joyful pursuit of Wisdom. ❖

The Pearl of Great Price

by Theresa Peek ('22)

It was January 29, at 12:30 p.m., when I decided, in a flash, that I must go to that tiny liberal arts college in California that I knew from hearsay.

A young friend of mine had attended a “camp” there. (I later understood this to be the High School Summer Program.) As well as stories of friendships forged around bonfires and mystifying new methods of mathematics, she brought back a plethora of pamphlets and brochures. My eyes fell on one in particular: the curriculum reading list. To a community college student such as myself, that list looked like beef and potatoes to someone on a mental diet of intellectual ramen.

But there seemed to be a long list of reasons why Thomas Aquinas College couldn't possibly be for me, I thought. I was older than most students, for one thing. Also, whereas the Pell Grant would render my English degree at the community college completely free, TAC came with a student loan that I might not pay off for several years. The sacrifices seemed daunting.

So what changed between those hungry glances at the brochures and that decisive winter afternoon?

I was at the community college with the goal of becoming a teacher. I wanted to bring truth and objectivity back into the American classroom, and I wanted to do my part in protecting the future generation from the strange and confused experiments which permeate our schools right now. However, I had almost no exposure to the riches of literature, poetry, history, etc., and I knew that unless I received some introduction to these things, I would be like the proverbial “blind leading the blind.”

By now it was my third semester at

the community college. I had ceased questioning “when” the real literature was going to trickle down through the range of optional classes. Rather, I was beginning to question “if” it ever would. Then, one lunchtime into my third week of the winter semester, I was conversing with my same young friend on literature, and something inside of my head snapped: I wanted to be a teacher, but this teen knew more than I did!

I suddenly knew I could not keep attending the community college. I knew in an instant that I needed to go to that college with the amazing reading list, no matter what the cost. Thomas Aquinas College and that fascinating list of Great Books had turned into the most important thing in the world for me.

“I have learned what Catholic charity, chastity, and zeal for Christ look like.”

Once I finally arrived, I had no notion of the treasure I had stumbled upon. I was standing in the very field of the pearl of great price and was unaware of it. I was ignorant enough to chuckle when the Assistant Dean's matriculation speech included something about our having “come in order to be wise.” I genuinely thought he was exaggerating, perhaps making a cynical joke. It did not occur to me that he might mean it.

If it took me six months to see my initial mistake, there are other things about Thomas Aquinas College which have taken me a full four years to learn.

I have learned that this school can become a beloved and true home. I have



learned that one's classmates can become a second family, deeply knit over the most profound thoughts of Western civilization and bonded by shared zeal for the Faith. I have learned what Catholic charity, chastity, and zeal for Christ look like when they are practiced in a community. I have learned what beautiful marriages look like in the examples of the tutors and their families around us. I have met and befriended people here, from my tutors and classmates to the alumni who helped to establish the new campus, whose examples will be guiding beacons and wellsprings of encouragement for the rest of my life.

As for the curriculum — why, yes, we are actually pursuing Wisdom! The pursuit begins at the classroom discussion tables, but it will be satisfied only in the Beatific Vision. In this regard, Thomas Aquinas College remains the faithful graduate's lifelong teacher, by having equipped him, not only with the readings of the Great Books, but with habits and examples of Catholic living which will help him finally attain that vision and possess Wisdom in eternity!

A week after graduation, I accepted an offer of a teaching position in an elementary school. Instead of the meager trickle of Western culture that I had looked for in community college, I now have the best preparation possible to be a teacher. But I have received immeasurably more than that. I have received an education that is worth having for its own sake. ❖

“The Victory has been Won”

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

You have been supportive of Thomas Aquinas College, New England, from the very beginning, visiting the campus when we first acquired it in 2017, and now serving as its first Commencement Speaker. Can you talk about what you have seen as the College has become established here over the last five years?

It's an extraordinary transformation of a place that was already naturally beautiful. I remember coming for the first time. I arrived on the wrong day for a planned open house, so I was the only one there! I remember going into the Chapel, which was beautiful, but very Protestant. There was no middle aisle, and the main focus in the church was the grand organ in the sanctuary. So when I arrived on campus for Commencement, and Dean Kaiser took us up to the Chapel — it was absolutely beautiful! It was a magnificent place for the celebration of the Eucharist. That was my first impression.

Later, when we were taking a walk outside, four young men came out from the dormitory, and they could not have been kinder and more hospitable. They went and got us a glass of water. I'm very impressed with the atmosphere and the camaraderie and the real wholesome spirit that pervades the campus. It was a great privilege to be there. I really enjoyed it.

You have worked hard to increase the number of vocations in your diocese. How are those efforts going?

It's an ongoing challenge, but thanks be to God, this year we are ordaining seven men to the priesthood, which in this day and age is a very good number. We are also ordaining two men to the transitional diaconate who



“I'm very impressed with the atmosphere and the camaraderie and the real wholesome spirit that pervades the campus.”

will be ordained, please God, next year. So I think I have 25 seminarians from first-year college seminary to diaconate.

We should have 50 seminarians, but unfortunately New England has one of the lowest rates of practicing Catholics in the country. I come from Rhode Island; I was ordained a priest in the Diocese of Providence. When I was growing up, it was the most Catholic diocese in the country. It had 1 million residents and 650,000 Catholics. When the Second Vatican Council opened in October 1962, almost 60 years ago, 85

percent of American Catholics went to Mass every Sunday. Now we are down to between 20 and 25 percent.

That's very concerning, a major pastoral problem. If it is true that two-thirds of baptized Catholics do not practice the Faith regularly and go to Mass, why would a young man — except for the singular grace of God, of course — even consider becoming a priest? Obviously at the center of a priest's life is the daily celebration of the Holy Eucharist. If that is a foreign experience to a young man, there's not a lot of linkage that would make the priesthood seem like something he would like to do with his life.

To what do you attribute this tremendous decline in the practice of the Faith?

Well, I describe it as almost an ecclesiological perfect storm. In Western culture there's been a crisis of faith. In Western Europe the Church really went into a quick decline after the Second World War. But here in the United States, there were three parts of the perfect storm: One, with the assassinations of John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, and Bobby Kennedy, our country was thrown into a type of cultural revolution. And, secondly, that was immediately followed by a sexual revolution. Then, the third part of the storm was a rapid decline in respect for authority and for institutions, including the Church.

Of course, within that cultural/political malaise the Church was trying to implement the Second Vatican Council. I firmly believe that the Second Vatican Council was a great gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church. But the implementation here in the United States and in other places got off the rails, particularly in the field of catechetics.



“Wherever Thomas Aquinas College graduates find themselves — they are going to be called to bring Christ to a place where He has been excluded.”

Concurrent with the decline of Faith you describe, we are seeing a rise in anti-Catholicism, with stories of churches being defaced, etc. Is that something you are witnessing in your diocese?

I think that we would be totally naïve to not think that there is a rise in anti-Catholicism, because fundamentally, the Roman Catholic Church in the United States will not bend the knee to political correctness, or what they are now calling “wokeism.” That infuriates people. We base our morality on Divine Revelation and the natural moral law. So what we claim to be morally true is not some kind of sectarian, Roman Catholic point of view. It can be justified in terms of unprejudiced human reason.

I see it happening even here locally. I have been involved in a controversy with Nativity School, a ministry of the Northeast Province of the Jesuits, which claims to be a Catholic school, but it has been

flying a gay pride flag and a Black Lives Matter flag. When I ordered the school to take the flags down, the officials refused. My opposition to flying the flags generated a lot of support all over the country, even internationally, but the opposition was vicious and vulgar. This is a manifestation of anti-Catholicism.

The school claims that those flags simply reflect an unconditional love of neighbor, befitting a Christian school. What’s wrong with that explanation?

We are called to love all people—heterosexual or homosexual — as they are created in the image and likeness of God. All people have an inviolable human dignity that no one can take away from them.

The gay pride flag, however, is a symbol that covers over some seriously immoral ideologies. It defies and denies the reality that, naturally and supernaturally, a mar-

riage is between one man and one woman. Therefore a school that purports to be Catholic and Jesuit should not fly such a flag. If the administrators want to fly a flag that says, “All people are God’s children,” that would be fine. If they want to fly a flag that says, “Racism is a sin,” as the Catholic Church teaches very clearly, that would be fine. But the Black Lives Matter organization has said that it wants to dismantle and deconstruct the nuclear family. It is committed to an ideology very much at odds with Catholic teaching.

That school includes grades 5-8, just boys. Many are Latino and African American; many come from a family that has been deconstructed of the nuclear model. They don’t have many men in their lives to teach them what it means to be a man, how a man should treat women, the responsibility to care for the children he brings into the world within the bond of marriage. It makes no sense for a Catholic school to endorse such an organization.

In your Commencement Address, you spoke about the dangers of relativism, which has long been the principal argument of those who oppose the Church. Yet those who once claimed that there is no right or wrong are now often adamant that the Church is wrong about pretty much everything. How is it that critics have swung so quickly from relativism to absolutism?

Because they have no philosophical foundation for what they are arguing. Their arguments are based on fallacies: One moral opinion is as good as another, until your moral opinion differs from mine. And if I have more power than you do, I will use my power to implement and impose my opinion on everyone else. That’s the beginning of totalitarianism.

In my Commencement Address I cited Alasdair MacIntyre. In his book *After Virtue*, he said that moral discourse in Western civilization — in particular, in the United States — has suffered a shipwreck because it has lost the ability to have moral discourse rooted in reason and virtue. We’re

not speaking the same language, or we’re using language that is polyvalent. People pick and choose which meaning happens to coincide with their political point of view or their ideology. That does not bode well for the common good of human society.

Have we come to a place where politics, rather than faith, often becomes the first lens through which too many of us view the world?

That’s true. When Ronald Reagan was president and had a very good working relationship with the American bishops and with Pope St. John Paul II, some satirist said that the Roman Catholic Church is the Republican Party at prayer. But the fact of the matter is, the Roman Catholic Church is not at home either in the Democratic Party or in the Republican Party.

Some people cannot understand that, people who are ideologues. But from the bishop’s point of view, the pastoral situations that have profoundly important moral dimensions must be addressed not because I am a Democrat, not because I am a Republican, but because I am a Roman Catholic bishop. I have taken promises and vows, and the Church has asked me to be a teacher of the orthodox faith. And that is what I will do, come hell or high water.

With the long-awaited overturn of *Roe v. Wade*, what happens next, in terms of the Church’s efforts to protect the dignity of all human life?

We’re going to find some very severe moral and political battles. Many Roman Catholic officeholders have hid and run from the abortion issue. I remember once talking to a very high-profile politician in the state of Rhode Island, and I challenged him on his support for abortion. And he said to me, “Father, I’m personally opposed, but I’ve taken an oath to uphold the Constitution, and a woman’s right to an abortion is a Constitutional right.” That explanation doesn’t work anymore. So we are going to move into some very tense times in the pastoral life of the Church in many cases.

In your Commencement Address, you urged the graduates to become “New Benedicts.” Yet your description seems different from what’s commonly known as “the Benedict Option,” which calls for a sort of regrouping or retrenchment. Your suggestion seems to be that, having had their four years to be formed, the graduates are now ready to engage the world. Is that correct?

Basically, yes. Benedict withdrew in the 4th century from the moral decadence and the full chaos of the decline of the Roman Empire to preserve culture through work, prayer, and study. As these monastic



“We are going to move into some very tense times in the pastoral life of the Church.”

communities grew in virtue, knowledge, and holiness, the role of the Benedictine communities was to leave their monasteries and, as pilgrims for Christ, go throughout

Europe and revive the culture and revive the Catholic faith. My point to the students is that, in a sense, any type of withdrawal at a particular moment in the culture is for the purpose of returning, but when and how you return should vary.

When the culture is so toxic vis-à-vis Christianity and specifically Catholicism, we have to regroup and form intentional communities in the life of the Church. But we do so not to withdraw from the world permanently and build our own little world. We take the riches of our Catholic moral and intellectual tradition back to those who are living around us, for the purpose of evangelization and conversion.

The students who have gone through Thomas Aquinas College are well prepared. It’s not the end, but they have begun on a lifelong trajectory of wisdom that has been well rooted in their college experience. They must build on that as they go into adulthood and take prominent places in the academy, the boardrooms, and the legislature.

What can the graduates do to keep Christ at the center of their lives?

What they have to do is seek out a parish that is orthodox, with a liturgy done according to the demands of the Church, where the preaching of the clergy is orthodox, where the catechetical programs are orthodox, where the authentic life of the Church is celebrated. And their parish has to become a fountain of spiritual life for them. It is impossible to live the Catholic moral life without the grace of the sacraments, particularly the Holy Eucharist and frequent Confession. You just can’t do it. You cannot do it at all.

Although there are many very troubling issues and realities in our culture at the present time, we have to keep our focus on this, that Christ is risen from the dead. He’s the Lord of History and the Prince of Peace, and He will have the last word.

So the victory has been won. We just have to do everything we can with His grace to make that victory manifest. To me, that’s the New Evangelization. ❖



New Benedicts

What's Next for the Class of 2022

In his 2022 Commencement Address at Thomas Aquinas College, New England, the Most Rev. Robert J. McManus, Bishop of Worcester, recalled the example of St. Benedict of Nursia, whose “withdrawal from the world was only in preparation to send forth Benedictine monks back into Western Europe to share the fruit of their work, prayer, and study.” His Excellency then issued an implied challenge. “Thomas Aquinas College has prepared you to be the new ‘Benedicts’ of our contemporary American culture,” he told the graduates, “something that our contemporary American culture desperately needs.”

Having retreated from the world for four years to pursue the good of a Catholic liberal education, the members of the Class of 2022 are now ready to follow St. Benedict's lead and take their place at the vanguard of the New Evangelization.

Graduate School

After four years steeped in the Great Books, many members of the Class of 2022 find their thirst for formal schooling not slaked, but whetted, and are thus venturing

onward to advanced study. **Cory Turner** (CA'22) will pursue a Ph.D. in philosophy at the University of St. Thomas in Houston, Texas. Some 200 miles to the north, **Ben Augros** and **Peter McDonald** (both NE'22) will pursue doctorates at Baylor University, Mr. Augros in philosophy and Mr. McDonald in political science. “I've always loved nature and I've always wanted to know the causes in nature,” notes Mr. Augros. “According to Aristotle and St. Thomas, that's what philosophy's about.”

Jonahs Chavez (NE'22) will seek a



master's degree in theology at the International Theological Institute in Gäming, Austria, and **Isaac Filipi** (CA'22) will dwell at the intersection of contemplation and the spiritual works of mercy as he earns a degree in marriage and young adult counseling through Divine Mercy University. Other members of the Class of 2022 with graduate school in their near future include **Peter Lucas**, **Kenneth Hansen**, and **Jordan Raum** (all CA'22), as well as **Mary O'Reilly**, **Rosamarie Salas**, **Lia Clarity**, and **Clothilde Cecchi** (all NE'22).



Priesthood and Religious Life

Several men in the Class of 2022 have chosen to “abandon their nets” (Mark 1:18) and commit themselves fully to following Christ by discerning vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

John Greene and **Timothy Wasell** (both CA'22) are joining the Norbertine Fathers at St. Michael's Abbey in Silverado, California. “My years at the College were some of the best of my life and a splendid preparation for the priesthood,”

reflects Mr. Greene. “Now that God has accepted me into the Norbertines, I pray I may put His gifts to good work.”

In August, **Peter Goyette** (NE'22) joined the Dominicans of the Province of St. Joseph, entering their novitiate at St. Gertrude Priory in Cincinnati, Ohio. “I really don't see how I could have discovered a religious vocation if I hadn't come to TAC,” he says. “Being surrounded by a bunch of people who are holier than I am has inspired me to pray more, and not to take the access to the sacraments that we have here for granted.”



Education

“Now that we have the good of liberal education,” says **Elijah Perrine** (CA'22), “I think I speak for everyone in saying that we can't help but go out and share that with others.” Mr. Perrine, along with **Elizabeth McSorley**, **Jacob Steineke**, and **Brandon Wang** (all CA'22), will be sharing that good at several Great Hearts Academies in Arizona, while **Mary Sorenson** (CA'22) will teach at a Chesterton Academy in Sacramento, California; **Nathan Andruess** (NE'22) at Austin Achieve in Austin, Texas; and **Catherine Simia** (NE'22) at St. Benedict Classical Academy in Natick, Massachusetts. **Paul Metilly** (NE'22) and **Peter Dowdy** (CA'22) will serve in the classrooms of Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Boston. **Sarah Niblock**, **Therese Sauder**, and **Chaeli Borchers** (all CA'22), as well as **Theresa Peek** and **Sophie Steigerwald** (both NE'22), will teach at classical schools across the Midwest and Northeast. **Thérèse Flanders** and **Anna Santine** (both CA'22) will be-



come teachers for Mother of Divine Grace, the distance-learning program founded by TAC alumna Laura Berquist ('75). Meanwhile, other graduates are seeking advanced teaching certifications: **Mary**

Shaye Brost (CA'22), through the Institute for Catholic Liberal Education, and **Juliana Silva** (CA'22), through CalState Teach.

Law and Public Service

Joseph Lynch and **Daniel Sabados** (both CA'22) have been accepted into law programs at Georgetown and Ave Maria universities, respectively. “I'm going into law because I enjoy persuading people of the truth,” notes Mr. Sabados, “and helping people who may not be in a position to reason as well for themselves.” Others venturing into the legal field include **Gregory Jackson** and **Justin Camp** (both CA'22), who will seek work in



legal and political capacities while finalizing their applications to graduate school. **Mary Pipes**, **Nicole Walshe**, and **Olivia Perry** (all CA'22) have accepted positions at the Alvarez Law Firm, founded by Justin Alvarez ('97), in Camarillo, California.

Others will approach law and public service from different angles. **Joe Caldwell** (NE'22) is endeavoring to join the Highway Patrol. “The U.S. has given me a lot of privileges and freedoms, and I've had the idea in the back of my mind that I should be giving something back,” he says. “Thomas Aquinas College is rigorous. You have to be on top of your game with studies. Likewise, you have to be on top of your game with law enforcement. I think that aspect translates

well from our studiosity here to a more active lifestyle.” **Margaret Short** (NE'22) will venture to Washington, D.C., to work as a think-tank intern. “I grew up in a very political family,” she says. “We were always

going out to do pro-life work or some sort of activism, and so it's something that's always interested me.”



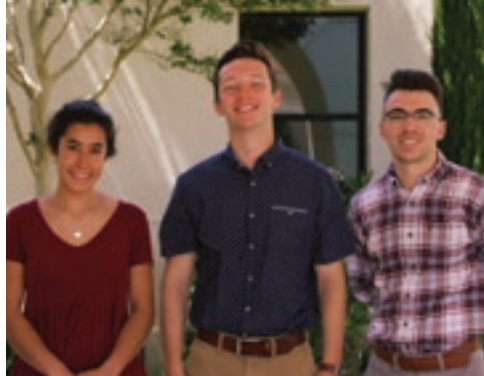
Business

Nor will the business world be deprived of its share of the TAC harvest. **Lucy O'Reilly** (CA'22) will pursue an advanced business degree at The Catholic University of America. “The object of business is people, and how to fulfill their wants and needs and desires,” says Miss O'Reilly. “TAC inspired me to want to figure out how to do that ethically. In the classroom we learned how to talk to people, how to communicate in different dynamics, and that's a huge part of business.” **Sarah Preciado** (NE'22) likewise intends to attend business school after taking a gap year. Other business-minded graduates include **Peter Donahoe** (NE'22), who will work as a commercial realtor, and future salesmen **Maximilian Tittmann** (CA'22) and **Victor Ulizko** (NE'22).



Non-profit / Apostolate

“I don't think money would get me out of bed in the morning, but helping other people would,” says **Nathanael Cassidy** (NE'22), who will work in development and fundraising for American Philanthropic, a consulting firm based out of Pennsylvania which specializes in strengthening nonprofit organizations. He hopes to bring the unique



perspective of Catholic liberal education to his job. “Thomas Aquinas College taught me to dive into the nitty-gritty and to see the overarching causes and end goals that you have to keep in mind.” **Collette McCormack** (CA’22) will work in the offices of the Cherterton Academies in Illinois; **Gabe Kopp** (CA’22) for the Cana Family Institute in Crystal, Minnesota; **Joe Grumbine** (CA’22) for his alma mater’s Advancement Office in California; and **Genevieve Urban** (CA’22) will lend her hand to the pro-life cause by working for Live Action. **Abigail Mering** (CA’22) has accepted an internship at the Claremont Institute, for which she wrote several articles while still a student.

Technology

Maria Therese Goyette (CA’22) is relocating to Virginia, where she will work in cybersecurity, while **Connor Gray** (CA’22) has lined up a coding job. **Thomas Doylend** (NE’22) will take on the technical side of the College’s communications efforts while working from the New England campus, and **Joseph Birch** (CA’22) is going into software development. “I think TAC gave me a good preparation for software development,” he says. “It’s problem-solving: You’re always asking, ‘How do I make this go from one end to another without any breaks?’”



Arts & Craftsmanship

Several graduates will pursue artistic paths of various kinds. “The College has definitely prepared me to think about what material I’d want to work with to pursue the true and beautiful in an art form,” says **Peter Duchow** (NE ’22) who is boldly entering the world of film. **Jeffrey Healey** (NE’22), inspired by “seeing the workers build Our Mother of Perpetual Help Chapel,” has decided to ply the carpenter’s trade. **Margaret Murphy** (CA’22) will work for John Canning & Co., a restoration company based out of Connecticut. “Rather than building things from the ground up, they go into old buildings and restore them to what they originally looked like,” she says. “I’ll be shadowing someone who has a hand in all the areas — both the hands-on work itself, as well as some of the business side.”



Marriage

In addition to pursuing their various careers, a number of students have undertaken a far more substantial change in their lives, marriage. **Elizabeth Brown** (CA’22) wed Jacob Scherer (CA’21) on May 21, and one day later **Cory Turner** (CA’22) married Rachael Flanders (CA’21). They were followed over the next weeks by **Grace Anderson** and **Benjamin Augros** (both NE’22) on May 26, **Simone Kelly** and **Nathanael Cassidy** (both NE’22) on June 4, **Joseph Lynch** (CA’22) and Ayla Rice (’21) on June 11, and



New England graduates Simone (Kelly) and Nathanael Cassidy were wed June 4 in Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel on the California campus.

then **Gemma Quackenbush** and **Gregory Jackson** (both CA’22) on June 18. Moreover, six other ’22 couples are scheduled to tie the knot later this year or early next.

What is it about Thomas Aquinas College that leads to so many weddings so soon after graduation? “You can grow in your spiritual life together here in a unique way, because you’re already living a shared life,” reflect Mr. and Mrs. Cassidy. “That’s something you can bring to marriage.”

... and More!

The universality of a TAC education lends itself to such a wide array of career paths that some defy categorization. **Edward O’Reilly** (CA’22), for instance, is slated to enter the wine industry as a wine-lab technician. “I’ll test for quality control,” he explains. “It’s a lot about taste, which is an important step along the way.”

“In order to defend a culture, you must first know it,” noted Carl A. Anderson in his address to this year’s graduates on the California campus, “and few know the achievement of Western genius and the culture which it has produced better than you.” Members of the Class of 2022 will carry that heritage joyfully into their futures, which range wide across the gamut of modern life, ready and eager “to make a defense to anyone who calls them to account for the hope that is in them” (1 Peter 3:15). ❖

Commencement 2022 Keepsakes!

Order photos and portraits at thomasaquinas.edu/commencement2022



UPCOMING EVENTS

	Convocation August 20		Alumni & Parent Day..... September 10
	Convocation August 22		Alumni & Parent Day..... October 8
	Opening Lecture August 26 Dr. Paul J. O’Reilly “What can the New Atheists Teach us about our Program?”		Inauguration of Dr. Paul J. O’Reilly Fifth President of TAC October 22
	Opening Lecture September 2		Dedication of the Pope St. John Paul II Athletic Center October 22

For complete campus calendars, see: thomasaquinas.edu/events
For Mass schedules, see: thomasaquinas.edu/masstimes



THOMAS AQUINAS COLLEGE

10000 Ojai Road

Santa Paula, CA 93060-9622

thomasaquinas.edu | 800-634-9797

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

